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MEMORIES OF MY TIME

INCLUDING

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF EMINENT MEN.

BY

GEORGE HODDER,

AUTHOR OF "SKETCHES OF LIFE AND CHARACTER," &c.

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TO

PETER MERRIK HOARE, Esq., M.P.,

WHOSE GENIAL SOCIETY

IS AMONG THE HAPPY MEMORIES

OF

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

WHEN I sat down to commit these reminiscences to paper, I felt the extreme difficulty, and even delicacy, of the task I had undertaken; and I am too well aware how inadequately I have performed it; but I have been impelled throughout by a consciousness that the peculiar relations in which I had stood with men who have won renown in the struggle for literary distinction, had supplied me with facts sufficiently interesting to be laid before the world. However imperfectly I may have discharged my self-imposed duty, I am naturally induced to hope I have related something which future biographers will not disdain to use; and I must at the same time state that I have often, in the fulfilment of my design, been interrupted by the sad reflection that so many brave spirits have passed away with whom I once enjoyed familiar intercourse, and whose sayings and doings I

never dreamt I should one day see the necessity and opportunity for recording. But,

> "We are not as ourselves, but as our keepers,
> In trust for others greater than ourselves."

Encouraged by this sentiment, I have proceeded in my work, with the conviction that I was doing that which even far wiser heads would have felt bound to do, with the same appliances at their disposal, and that I was thus rescuing from oblivion facts and occurrences which, if they had not come to me "in trust for others," I can hardly bring myself to believe I should ever have known at all.

In referring to the correspondence and data which are still before me, I may observe that, had I treated of subject-matter which I have withheld from publication, in addition to what is set forth in the following pages, this book would have assumed greatly increased proportions. My prevailing desire, however, has been to avoid placing upon record any incident or letter which does not in some measure partake of the character of "public interest;" and I trust that, in carrying out this guiding principle, I have not been led into any error of commission which might seem invidious or compromising to individuals specially referred to. I hope, moreover, that

in my somewhat disjointed narrative I have, though only in a small degree, reflected the literary character and habits of eminent men of this century; and I believe I may state that, when I have not actually done this, I have, at least, introduced names sufficiently distinguished to be associated with literature.

In the occasional references I have made to the actors of the present day I have been as brief as possible, because I found I could not easily dwell upon their characteristics, social or dramatic, without treading on the confines of criticism, and it has been no part of my province to approach such dangerous ground. I have passed many delightful hours in the company of metropolitan actors, from the days of Robert Strickland (most genial of "old men," and most buoyant of young ones) to the present time, and might recount many more anecdotes concerning them than I have done; but I would rather avoid a task which could not lead to a complete result, and which would be far better performed by one who is more practically conversant with the mysteries of the dramatic art and its professors than I can possibly be.

As for the "poor player"* himself, he is generally so

* It is some satisfaction to know that this term is being gradually

good a *raconteur*, and has so many admirable stories at his command, that he would sit in very severe judgment upon any one who attempted to handle a weapon which may almost be called exclusively his own. As, however, it is not the Actor, but rather the Author who may be said to be the hero of this book, it is right that my prefatory observations should have especial reference to the latter; but I shall spare myself the responsibility of dwelling at any length upon a subject which has been so ably treated by other writers—notably by Mr. Thackeray, in his "English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century."

It would be folly to deny that Mr. Thackeray makes out a strong case when he says that "Society does not look down upon a man because he is an author," and that "many a brave fellow has failed in the race and perished unknown in the struggle." But my experience has taught me that many a brave fellow who has *succeeded* in the race has yet perished unknown. That is to say, he has made for himself a reputation with the publishers, and has even risen

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exploded; for those who have any knowledge on the subject are well aware that, with a fair amount of success, the player may secure what is called a comfortable income, and in many instances a moderate competence.

to the dignity of being *asked* to write, but, on quitting the scene of his labours, he has not been known to the outside world, and has established no absolute title to a niche in the Temple of Fame. He has struggled hard and manfully, and has, perhaps, exhibited traces of genius; but his career has terminated in an apt illustration of the time-honoured doctrine, that "the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong."

Such men have probably lacked those pushing and persuasive qualities which have stood in valuable stead others of far less pretensions. Their physical strength, in short, has not been proportionate to their mental capacity, and they have been content to receive a moderate consideration for that which they have not the heart, or even, perhaps, the desire, to perpetuate.

In reviewing the names of the most prominent contributors to our magazines during the last quarter of a century, it is almost painful to reflect how few there are whose collected works have been thought essential to the adornment of a library, or recognised as suggestive topics for the conversation of the learned. No doubt many writers have achieved distinction by the production of one book alone, while others have not been able to make for themselves a name through the medium of twenty, but this has been in

very exceptional cases, where the theme has been especially fortunate, and the popular applause has, by some fortuitous circumstances, flowed in one unbroken current. Indeed, it may be said without much fear of contradiction, that many of our best known authors are those who have produced the smallest number of works, and who were never regarded as mere strugglers in the literary field; but it is not a little curious to note the striking examples there are of men who have passed away, after displaying conspicuous ability, and their names are never heard.

I have mentioned, towards the close of this book, the late Charles Whitehead—timid, gentle, and retiring in his normal condition, energetic and passionate to a degree when excited—and I now allude to him because he affords a peculiar illustration of the dictum I have advanced; for it often occurred to me that, in the writings of Charles Whitehead, there was the ring of true genius—an epigrammatic force and terseness, which pointed him out as one whose mental gifts lifted him somewhat above many of his contemporaries; and yet it is not long since that I found, on my introducing his name in a literary circle as a man of marked ability, that there was more than one person present who had never read a line of his works!

Those works are certainly by no means numerous, nor do I instance them as manifesting any powers of a transcendental order, but simply as calling to my mind an author of our own time, who, in common with others of corresponding endowments, "made his mark," though not of such a nature as to be called indelible.

There are, doubtless, many persons in this title-loving country who would dislocate their necks to see a live lord in a crowd, but who would not turn their heads in a solitary road to look at a mere author. To such as these the present work makes no appeal, but relies exclusively on the encouragement the writer hopes it may receive from those who estimate at their due value the workers in the intellectual world, and who would gladly know all that may reasonably be told concerning them.

I have accidentally, as will be seen, become the depository of much interesting material connected with men whom I may fitly designate eminent, and as this material has stimulated my memory, I have ventured, in all frankness and in a spirit of the most rigid truthfulness, to narrate a series of personal recollections, which I trust will, at least, have the negative merit of being hurtful to no one.

Since the book was consigned to the printing-press many questions have been put to me regarding its contents—as to whether I have introduced any mention of this or that person's name, and whether I have recorded some particular incident or story which has appeared familiar to the interrogator. To these questions I have sometimes been obliged to reply in the negative, for I have been fearful lest I should extend the work beyond those limits which its moderate pretensions warranted me in prescribing; but I hope it will be found that my reminiscences have not betrayed me into the exclusion of subject matter which ought to have been given, while a place has been made for names and events which it would have been wiser to omit.

In looking back through the long period of years which have past since the date of my earliest association with the various prominent characters whose sayings and doings are scattered about these pages, I feel no inconsiderable sense of pain, for I am reminded of the many bright intellects that have been called away—of the pleasure I experienced in their presence—and of the loss which the world has sustained by their absence. That I have profited by their society and their teaching to such an extent

as I might have done I do not for a moment pretend to aver; but I trust that sufficient proof will be discerned in this volume that, in calling up these "memories of my time," I fully appreciate the advantage of having *known* the great men to whom they especially relate.

I am perfectly conscious that I have rendered myself liable to the charge of having been at too great pains to exhibit the virtues, while disguising the faults, of the many characters I have severally introduced. To this my simple answer is, that I have thought fit to record that which would seem to be deserving of emulation, rather than give expression to aught which might be much more successfully described by one who, looking at life through a jaundiced medium, would not stoop to be guided—as I confess I have been—by the poet's gentle admonition—

> "Be to their virtues very kind;
> Be to their faults a little blind."

Lolworth, St. Ives,
March, 1870.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory—Christopher North on the Value of Biographical Reminiscences—First Meeting with Douglas Jerrold—A Chemical Experimentalist—Jerrold's Wit and Friendly Disposition—Letters from Douglas Jerrold and Others—The Social Qualities of the former, and the Clubs he started—The Chronicles of Clovernook . . . . . Pp. 1—16

CHAPTER II.

Visit to Jerrold at Boulogne-sur-Mer—The Bandit's Haunt—A hasty Dip in the Sea—The Production of "The Prisoner of War"—Jerrold's Dramas—Juvenile Parties—A Visit to the Coast of Kent—"The Illuminated Magazine"—Serious Illness of Jerrold—The Cold-Water Cure . . . . . Pp. 17—38

CHAPTER III.

The Origin ot *Punch*—First Contributors to that Periodical—John Leech's First Cartoon—*Punch's* Original Prospectus—Edward Mayhew's Books on the Horse and the Dog—The Mayhew Family—Jerrold and Van Amburgh—Henry Mayhew's Lectures, and Books of Practical Usefulness Pp. 39—66

CHAPTER IV.

The Chairmanship of the "Punch Club"—John Leech and "Bentley's Miscellany"—Leech's Friendly Offices—Anecdote of Sir Henry Webb—Albert Smith—His Connexion with *Punch*—Letters from Albert Smith—Sea-side Recreations with him—His Ascent of Mont Blanc, and Entertainment at the Egyptian Hall . . . . . Pp. 67—97

CHAPTER V.

Kenny Meadows and Thomas Moore—Meadows's Illustrations to *Punch* — George Cruikshank's Advocacy of Teetotalism — Cruikshank at a Supper with Costermongers — His Picture of Fagin in the Condemned Cell—"Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine"—The French Revolution of 1848—Visit to Paris with Jerrold at that Period—John Poole, the Author of "Paul Pry"—Father Prout and the Paris Correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*. . . . . Pp. 98—121

CHAPTER VI.

Revolutionary Times—The Wolf at the Door—Father Prout and Thomas Francis Meagher at a Dinner Party—Sir Joseph Paxton and his Design for the Great Exhibition Building in 1851—The 50th Anniversary of Jerrold's Birthday—The late E. H. Baily, R.A.—Jerrold's Last Illness and Death—His Funeral at Norwood Cemetery. . . . . Pp. 122—139

CHAPTER VII.

Introduction to Mr. Charles Dickens—Elton, the Tragedian—Wreck of the Steamer *Pegasus*—Public Subscription for the Benefit of Elton's Family—The Art Union of London—The Sanatorium, or Home in Sickness—Miss Kelly, the celebrated Actress—Mr. Harley, the Comedian, and the Duke of Leinster—"Every Man in his Humour"—Charles Dickens, John Forster, &c., in an Amateur Performance. . . . . Pp. 140—159

CHAPTER VIII.

Leigh Hunt in Private Life—The late Thomas Hood—A Scheming Autograph-seeker—"Leigh Hunt's London Journal"—Correspondence with Leigh Hunt—James Sheridan Knowles—Douglas Jerrold and Sheridan Knowles—Anecdotes of the latter—First Visit to a Theatre—Macready as Sardinapulus—The great Tragedian at Home. . . . . Pp. 160—179

CHAPTER IX.

A Plea for an Invocation—A University Student—Performance of "Hamlet" by Amateurs—Riot in the Theatre—Tragedy Burlesqued—The Rebellious Audience addressed from a Private

Box—A Hit more Palpable than Usual—A College Letter from Hamlet—The Destiny of the Performers and Fate of the "Rebels" . . . . . Pp. 180—199

CHAPTER X.

"A rolling Stone gathers no Moss"—Fallacy of the Proverb—W. M. Thackeray, the Writer, and J. L. Hatton, the Composer—Recollections of celebrated Musicians—The Amenities of Music—A Novel Entertainment and its Results—Musical Tours—An Opera Troupe in a Storm—The Romance of a Tenor's Life . . . . . Pp. 200—236

CHAPTER XI.

William Makepeace Thackeray—Letters from Thackeray—His Readiness to Serve a Friend in Need—M. Aretz, the Tailor, and the Paris Sketch-book—Thackeray's Views of Literary Men—"The Four Georges"—Amanuensis to Thackeray—The Great Author at Work—His Talk during his Leisure Moments—His Second Mission to the United States . . Pp. 237—256

CHAPTER XII.

Dinner to Thackeray—The Speech he wrote for the Occasion—Macbeth and Forres Castle, Dr. Birch and Rodwell Regis—Baron Marochetti's Child—Thackeray on the Morning of his Departure for America—His Return from that Country—Arrangements for his Lectures on "The Four Georges"—A Tour with Thackeray in the Provinces—*Where* he could write, and in what manner he wrote!—His Mistrust of his own Powers . . . . . Pp. 257—275

CHAPTER XIII.

Charles Dickens and "Dombey and Son"—The Dinner of the General Theatrical Fund—Thackeray as Chairman—Charles Dickens as a Public Speaker—The "Cornhill Magazine" and the "Hogarth Papers"—Autograph-seekers—Albert Smith and Thackeray in a Lady's Album—An Audience of Students at Oxford—Contrast between Oxford and Leamington regarding the Effect of the Lectures—A little Dinner at the Phœnix Hotel . . . . . Pp. 276—292

CHAPTER XIV.

Stratford-on-Avon—Orsini, the Italian Patriot—A Smoky Bedchamber, and Alarm of the Household—A Visit, with Orsini, to Shakespeare's Birthplace and Stratford Church—A Local Exhibition of Theatrical Portraits—The Grenades for the Attempted Assasination of the Emperor Napoleon—Orsini's Subsequent Crime and Execution—Success of Thackeray's Lectures at Norwich—Severe Illness of Thackeray in that City—His Death and Burial . . . . . Pp. 293—312

CHAPTER XV.

Vincent Wallace, the Composer—Charles Kemble—His Performances before Her Majesty—The Player and the Tailor—A "Dead Man" *redivivus*—Letters from Charles Kean, Robert Keeley, and Others—Farewell Benefit and Dinner to Charles Mathews—Angus B. Reach and "The Man in the Moon"—A Stray Leaf from that Publication—Mr. Thackeray on Pronunciation—Charles Whitehead and his Writings. Pp. 313—361

CHAPTER XVI.

My First Acquaintance with George Augustus Sala—His Contributions to "Household Words" and the *Daily Telegraph*—Mr. Thackeray and the "Cornhill Magazine"—The "Temple Bar" Magazine—Joseph Jefferson as Rip Van Winkle, and at the Dinner Table—A Boomerang for Home Use—First Night of "Never Too Late to Mend"—Disturbance at the Princess's Theatre . . . . . Pp. 362—383

CHAPTER XVII.

Peter Cunningham at School—His Skill as an Annotator—His Antiquarian Researches—The Tomb of Alexander Pope—Vandyck in England—The Hand-book of London—Journeys to Paris with Wm. Blanchard Jerrold—Dangerous Hands—The Courts of Prud'hommes—French Speculators—The Keys of the First Emperor's Tomb—A Descendant of the Captain of the *Inconstant*—Anecdotes of James Hannay, Thackeray, and Gustave Doré—Conclusion . . . . . Pp. 384—420

MEMORIES OF MY TIME.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory—Christopher North on the Value of Biographical Reminiscences—First Meeting with Douglas Jerrold—A Chemical Experimentalist — Jerrold's Wit and Friendly Disposition—Letters from Douglas Jerrold and Others — The Social Qualities of the former, and the Clubs he started—The Chronicles of Clovernook.

I HAVE no desire to inflict upon the reader of the following pages an autobiographical notice of one who has played far too small a part in the literature of the day to render his own name worthy of attentive consideration. It is with the names of others that I propose to deal, my main object being to bring under the notice of those who feel an interest in what pertains to the lives of eminent literary men a few personal reminiscences of writers with whom I have had the privilege of being associated—sometimes under circumstances of pride and responsibility, and generally in a manner which has

excited my respect and regard. It would, of course, be futile to attempt, in a record of this nature, any systematic order of arrangement, as the material I have before me is not such as could be effectively laid out in chronological sequence; but the reader, it is hoped, will not be the less disposed to follow these varied recollections because they are given discursively, and, in some instances, without strict regard to dates.

That most stalwart "philosopher and friend," Christopher North, in touching on the subject of "legitimate biography," says, "The world would seem to have a natural right to know much of the mind, morals, and manners of the chosen few—as they exhibited themselves in private life—whose genius may have delighted or enlightened it,—to know more than in general can have been revealed in their works. It desires this, not from a paltry and prying curiosity, but in a spirit of love or admiration, or gratitude, or reverence. It is something to the reader of a great poet, but to have seen him, to be able to say '*Virgilium tantum vidi.*' How deeply interesting to hear a few characteristic anecdotes related of him by some favoured friend! To have some glimpses at least, if not full and broad lights, given to us into his domestic

privacy and the inner on-goings beneath what, to our imaginations, is a hallowed roof! We cannot bear to think that our knowledge of our benefactors—for such they are—should be limited to the few and scanty personal notices that may be scattered under the impulse of peculiar emotions here and there, over their writings; we cannot bear to think that, when the grave closes upon them, their memory must survive only in their works; but the same earnest and devout spirit that gazes upon the shadows of their countenances on the limner's canvas, yearns to hear it told, in pious biography, what manner of men they were at the frugal or the festal board, by the fire-side, in the social or the family circle, in the discharge of those duties that solemnize the relations of kindred, and that support the roof-tree of domestic life."

Fortified by the dictum of so high an authority, I am the less reluctant to bring to light the few scattered reminiscences I possess of the eminent men I have known. The leading events of their lives have been, or remain to be, recorded by abler pens than I can pretend to wield; but I am sure I need offer no excuse for making my small contribution to the general stock of knowledge, which may be massed for future biographies. This I hope to do without setting down

aught that the individuals treated of would wish to blot out as an intrusion on their privacy, or that the most jealous and affectionate of biographers would consider as beneath or beyond his exclusive province; and I shall be amply rewarded for my pains if I succeed in adding some small proof to the testimony given by Thomas Carlyle, that "great men taken up any way are profitable company."

On our losing a dear friend, or hearing of the death of some distinguished person whose features and character were familiar to us, it is a common practice to ask ourselves the question, when it was that we "last saw him;" but it is by no means as usual to reflect upon the period when we *first* saw him; and yet it may fairly be said that the one event was not less interesting than the other. Leigh Hunt, in his memoir of Lord Byron, speaks of the first time he ever saw the poet; but he recalls the fact in a manner which critics have not hesitated to condemn as at variance with good taste. I hope, therefore, that when I mention the circumstances under which I first saw the late Douglas Jerrold I shall only be recording an incident which the great wit himself, or his biographer and son, William Blanchard Jerrold, would hardly fail to smile at good-humouredly.

I had, a few months previously, become the intimate associate of Henry Mayhew, who has long since gained for himself a well-known name in the roll of literary worthies, and who had but just achieved a privilege he had long sought, viz., that of being admitted to the friendship of Douglas Jerrold. Henry Mayhew was then living next door to the Colosseum, in Albany Street, Regent's Park, and was constantly engaged in experiments with an electric battery, which were fraught with some danger, and once had the effect of producing an explosion, which created no little alarm amongst the neighbours. In order to be well protected against the mischievous influence of the chemicals used in his scientific investigations, he was accustomed to wear an entire suit of some black material, highly glazed and loosely made. On one occasion he had asked me to come to his house to see some of his experiments, and I too gladly availed myself of the invitation, though I had no idea at the time that I (a mere stripling under 20 years of age) should then have the gratification of meeting an author whose writings in the "New Monthly Magazine" I had read admiringly, and whose plays I was bold enough to think (as, indeed, I still think) were among the most charming productions of our

dramatic literature. To my great delight, however, I had not been in the room many minutes before I was introduced to Douglas Jerrold, who was flitting about with that peculiar restlessness of eye, speech, and demeanour, which was among his most marked characteristics. I confess I was not surprised to find him a man of small stature, as I had heard before that his proportions were rather those of Tydeus than of Alcides; but I was a little astonished when I saw in the author of "Black-eyed Susan," "The Rent-Day," and "The Wedding Gown" (all of which pieces and many others he had then produced), an amount of boyish gaiety and a rapidity of movement which one could hardly expect from a writer who had risen to high rank as a moralist and censor.

As a matter of course, a friendly interchange of jokes took place; for Henry Mayhew, though young, had shown, by his farce of "The Wandering Minstrel," and other kindred works, that a keen sense of wit and humour was among his intellectual qualities; and after a few satirical allusions on Jerrold's part to what he obviously thought the visionary nature of Henry Mayhew's occupation, he turned suddenly upon the ambitious experimentalist (whose highly polished clothing had caused him much amusement), and ex-

claimed, "Why, you look like an advertisement of Warren's blacking!" * It is not for me to say whether this little *jeu d'esprit* was of the most brilliant order of joking, but I am at least bound to state that the rapid flash produced its natural effect, and no one laughed more heartily than Jerrold himself; for it was a doctrine of his, as it was of Charles Lamb, that a man had a perfect right to laugh at his own jest.†

From that time forth I saw much of Douglas Jerrold, and few had better or more frequent opportunities of observing the kindliness of his nature, and the pleasure he took in performing offices of friendship for literary aspirants in whom he felt an interest. As to his many good sayings, so slight was his estimate of their possible effect, that even friendship seemed to have no charm against the shaft, and hence it became a stereotyped phrase that Jerrold was always

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* This *mot* has been published by Blanchard Jerrold in his "Wit and Opinions of Douglas Jerrold;" but inasmuch as he received it from me, I shall not be accused of plagiarism; and I give it precisely as it occurred.

† Shakespeare expresses himself to a different effect, when he says—

> "A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
> Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
> Of him that makes it."
>
> *Love's Labour's Lost.*

"bitter"—an accusation which gave him so much pain that he more than once, in his writings, made it the subject of earnest deprecation. Against this charge of bitterness his son aptly vindicates him. He says: "Although Douglas Jerrold often said bitter things, even of his friends, this bitterness never lost him a friend; for to all men who knew him personally, he was valued as a kind and hearty man; he sprang ever eagerly to the side even of a passing acquaintance who needed a kindness. He might possibly speak something keenly barbed on a grave occasion; but his help would be substantial and his sympathy not the less hearty. For with him a witty view of men and things forced itself upon his mind so continually and irresistibly, and with a vividness and power so intense, that sarcasm flashed from his lips even when he was deeply moved. He knew that his subjection to the dominant faculty of his mind had given him a reputation in the world for ill-nature; and he writhed under this imputation; for he felt how little he deserved it." It is quite unnecessary for me to confirm this statement by any words of my own, but I shall select from a correspondence which is now before me two letters of Jerrold's in order to show how tenderly considerate he was for the feelings of a friend under

the most delicate circumstances. Moreover, the letters are strongly characteristic of Jerrold's laconic and forcible style. The first is an answer to an invitation I had just sent him to be present at my wedding, and is as follows :—

"September 22nd, 1852.

"Dear George,—Don't you put yourself out of your way to be embarrassed by too many visitors. I'll see you when you come back, in your bran-new fetters. Meanwhile, I wish you both all happiness.

"Yours faithfully,

"D. Jerrold."

The second letter is dated in March, 1857, four years and a half afterwards, and refers to the death of my dear wife :—

"Dear George,—I have just heard from my daughter of your terrible bereavement. Believe me that I sympathize with you most deeply. Though knowing personally but too little of your dear wife, I know enough to feel that your loss must be dreadful. But sorrow is the penalty we pay for life. For the sake of the dear child you must bear up and wrestle with your affliction.

"Believe me sincerely yours,

"Douglas Jerrold."

In relation to this, my greatest grief, I cannot refrain from introducing another name illustrious in the republic of letters, that of Mr. Charles Dickens, to whose kindness and assistance in the struggles of life I have often been deeply indebted. Impelled by the sorrow I experienced I was induced to write some verses, under the title of "A Lament of the Heart," and these I forwarded to Mr. Dickens, in the hope that they might be received into the pages of "Household Words," which, as is well known, he was at that time conducting. As I have ventured to publish them elsewhere, I will not intrude them upon the reader in this place. Mr. Dickens, in a letter acknowledging their receipt, said :—

"I sympathize with you in the feelings which have prompted the verses, and I beg to offer you my condolences on the great loss which they very tenderly and touchingly deplore. But I think they express a private sorrow, and have not that public scope of address which is necessary to the purposes of 'Household Words.'"

So absorbed was I by my reflections on the loss I had sustained, that I dare say I thought at the time that Mr. Dickens, although expressing himself in the above consolatory terms, was a

somewhat severe editor for not accepting my verses, as it is by no means unusual to make "private sorrows" the subject of public writings; but I soon felt assured that he was quite right in rejecting the lines "on their merits."

That Jerrold's friends were many is sufficiently proved by the fact that in the various social clubs he established or assisted in establishing he always had the support and co-operation of men who knew him for his private worth as well as his public usefulness, and who were glad to belong to a society of which he was, by universal consent, the head and front. Not that he ever assumed to himself a dominating position, or that he wished it to be supposed that he possessed any special power of attraction in his personal characteristics; but he was essentially, as he called it, a "clubable man," and had the faculty of promoting good fellowship to an extent which few men have been able to inspire. Of the clubs he set afloat and gave names to, within my own recollection, I particularly call to mind those which he christened respectively "Hooks and Eyes" and "Our Club"—the former holding its weekly meetings at the "Albion," in Russell Street, Covent Garden, and the latter at Clunn's, in the Piazza, Covent

Garden.* Of the members of those clubs (one of which grew out of the other) there are many still living who will gladly vouch for the fact that he tuned the first instrument in the band—that he gave the key-note to their joviality, and that the company continued to look up to him as the ruling spirit in their social revels. Apropos of clubs, it may be here stated that Jerrold was so pleased with the success of his "Chronicles of Clovernook," and so impressed with the poetic sound and the lasting popularity of the name—"Clovernook!"—that although it can scarcely be called more than a fragment, he often declared his belief that it had a better chance of reaching the hands of future generations than the rest of his books. Sharing in this conviction, and wishing to pay a tribute to his father's memory, Blanchard Jerrold, some few years after his death, endeavoured, in conjunction with a select body of friends, to raise a sum of money, in shares, to purchase a freehold in the country, within a few

* Many years before this period Jerrold was an active member of a club, called "The Mulberries," which was held at the Wrekin Tavern, in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, and in which a regulation was established that "some paper, or poem, or conceit bearing upon Shakespeare should be contributed by each member," the general title being "Mulberry Leaves."

miles of London, for the purpose of establishing a rural retreat, in the shape of a club (to be called "the Clovernook"), to which its members might resort when anxious to escape from the cares and responsibilities of London life. The prospectus of this club I have not before me at the present moment, but having been its honorary secretary, I have in my possession several letters referring to it, and I transcribe a portion of one of them, because it emanates from a gentleman who was well qualified to form a judgment upon the subject. The letter is from John Cordy Jeaffreson, the author of "Crewe Rise," "Oliver Blake's Good Work," "A Book about Doctors," &c. He says:—

"The Clovernook Club has my warmest wishes for its success, and I hope one day to be a member of it. I also fully appreciate the compliment paid me by its promoters in placing my name on the committee; but I cannot, without knowing more exactly than I do at present the pecuniary arrangements and prospects of the undertaking, consent to be a shareholder. Although I am a literary man, I have not said 'Goodbye' to Caution and Prudence, and do not wish to render myself liable to be called upon to pay a large sum for expenses during the first or second year of the Club's existence—and yet in this unpleasant position I may find myself if I join in the responsibilities of an affair the probable durability of which I

know nothing about. On one occasion, and one only, Mr. —— invited me to join the Club, and I then stated that I heartily approved the scheme, and should like to be a member, but, as I was very likely going ere long to India, I did not think I should invest in a share."

Whether Mr. Jeaffreson's sly allusion to the fact that, *although* he was a literary man, he was not without caution and prudence, produced any immediate effect with intending members and shareholders need hardly be stated here; suffice it that the promoters of the scheme saw that it would be difficult to obtain the desired support from the only persons to whom they could wisely and conscientiously appeal, and therefore they very properly abandoned it before any material expense was incurred.

Mr. Jeaffreson (with whom I have since had the satisfaction to become more intimately acquainted than I was at that time) will, I am quite sure, pardon my giving publicity to his business-like communication, as it affords an opportunity of showing, in the face of the terrible reputation enjoyed by authors, that there *are* instances in which they have not said 'Good-bye' to Caution and Prudence.

It was at the two clubs above mentioned—the "Hooks and Eyes" and "Our Club"—that Douglas Jerrold was known to have said many of the best things that are recorded of him; but as the great majority of these have been published in "The Wit and Opinions of Douglas Jerrold," I need not now seek them out, although it is not to be supposed that the son was enabled to string together *all* the gems that reflected the flashing light of his father. The indefatigable literary explorer, Mr. John Timbs, has devoted several pages of his book on "Club Life" to a chapter on "Douglas Jerrold's Clubs," in which he has adroitly introduced much of the rich fruit that fell around the table when Jerrold was present. In point of fact, the wise and witty sayings of Jerrold have found so many chroniclers, in various shapes and forms, that it would perhaps be in vain to give any important instances which would not at once lead to the exclamation, "I have seen *that* before!"

As a specimen of the singularly laconic style of Jerrold's letters—a style which he has been heard to say, jocularly, that he adopted because he felt, when writing a private epistle, he was "not going to be paid for it"—the following note, received from him a

few days before Christmas Day, may be appropriately quoted:—

"Sunday evening.—Putney.

"DEAR HODDER,—Will you dine with me on Xmas Day?

"Yours truly,

"D. J."

The recollection of my long intercourse with Douglas Jerrold brings to my mind so many agreeable pictures in which he forms the most prominent figure, that I am tempted to dwell for a short time longer upon this part of my task, and to relate such of my experiences as relate especially to himself, unconnected, except in a small degree, with other men of literary distinction.

CHAPTER II.

Visit to Jerrold at Boulogne-sur-Mer—The Bandit's Haunt—A hasty Dip in the Sea — The Production of "The Prisoner of War" — Jerrold's Dramas — Juvenile Parties — A Visit to the Coast of Kent — "The Illuminated Magazine" — Serious Illness of Jerrold—The Cold-Water Cure.

ONE of my earliest and most agreeable reminiscences of Jerrold brings me to a period which at once suggests many occurrences of peculiar interest (as will presently be seen) to those who, in their estimate of public characters, would gladly acquire some knowledge of their private tastes and virtues. It was in the year 1841; and Jerrold had for some time domiciled himself and his family at a snug little villa at Boulogne, in the Rue D'Alger, Capécure, which, as "all England" knows (for all England is supposed to be familiar with Boulogne), is on "the other side of the water" from the town proper; his motive for residing in France being to educate his children—two girls (the elder of whom afterwards became Mrs. Henry Mayhew) and three boys. William Blanchard

Jerrold, the eldest son, was at that period a rosy-cheeked stripling of about fourteen years of age; and I am glad to think that, as time passed away, my acquaintance with him ripened into a substantial and enduring friendship. Jerrold had often written to friends in London, apprizing them of the comfortable quarters he was housed in, and inviting them to partake of his hospitality. Amongst those who were thus favoured was myself, and I well remember the cordial terms in which the invitation was conveyed, and the many temptations held out to me to undergo "the perils of the Channel" for the first time. The prospect of a fortnight's sojourn under the roof of such a companion as Douglas Jerrold was much too tempting to be resisted; and the pleasure I felt was enhanced when I received a letter from him, stating that, if I came on a given day at a specified time, the tide would enable me to arrive at Boulogne at an hour when he could meet me on the port. I went by "long sea," as it was called —that is to say, by steamboat direct from London Bridge to the harbour of this picturesque and enlivening watering-place. The day was a Sunday in the month of August, and the vessel reached its destination between two and three o'clock in the after-

noon. The weather was lovely in the extreme, and the port was thronged with people, all more or less anxiously looking for the arrival of the boat. The scene was altogether the most perfect instance of cheerful bustle and animation I had ever witnessed; and I was disposed to wonder how it was that, in the midst of so much attractive excitement, an author could find sufficient repose for the due exercise of his brain; for Jerrold was at that time engaged in many important literary undertakings.

Long before I was enabled to leave the deck of the vessel, I descried, to my infinite delight, Jerrold standing as near to the landing-place as the crowd would permit him; and the moment he saw me he gave me such a "sweet smile of welcome" that I could but feel what a care-dispelling visit fortune had placed in store for me. Then came the hearty shake of the hand, and the joke—far, far indeed from a "bitter" one—and the delay during the tedious ceremony at the Custom-house; for in those days the passport system was carried out with the most provoking determination. Arrived at Jerrold's dwelling, he exclaimed, as we entered, placing himself in a sort of theatrical attitude, "The bandit's haunt! Let us see what fare we have within!" I very soon found, how-

ever, that his habits were by no means of a melo-dramatic cast, and that he was surrounded by every comfort, not to say luxury, which could be desired by a contented and united English family abroad. His children were home from school that day, and I was much impressed by the pride and pleasure he seemed to feel in introducing them, and in pointing out jocosely their several characteristics.

He occupied himself "at his desk" (as he always expressed it when speaking of his mental employment) in the morning; and in the afternoon he was ready for a walk along the sands, or an excursion into the market-place to amuse himself with the fruit-vendors, or for a jaunt into the country to one of the many attractive little villages which lie within a few miles distance of Boulogne. A dip in the sea—his native element, as he sometimes called it—was a relaxation to which he was especially addicted; but he did not care to indulge it where the multitude were wont to assemble for the same object. On one occasion I was walking with him at sunset along the beach, in the outskirts of the town, when the tide was unusually low, and the sands were as smooth and unruffled as a drawing-room carpet. The charm of the weather seemed to absorb Jerrold's attention, for the evening

was as calm and placid as the countenance of a sleeping infant, and he made frequent allusions to the atmosphere, which, he said, was such as he had never experienced "out of France." At length, fixing his eye upon the almost-motionless sea, and inhaling the fresh air as if he were sipping nectar, he suddenly exclaimed: "How lovely the water looks! Egad, I'll have a dip!" and in scarcely more time than is occupied by the pantomime-clown in making his inevitable "change," he stuck his stick in the sand, placed his hat upon the top and his clothes around it, and ran into the water with a nimbleness which he could hardly have surpassed in the midshipman days of his youth.

During this visit to Douglas Jerrold, I made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan, the now celebrated, but then comparatively unknown, dramatic artists, who had been living for some weeks at Boulogne, and with whom I enjoyed a daily companionship.

Mr. and Mrs. Wigan were frequent guests at the house of Douglas Jerrold, who entertained a strong opinion in regard to the dramatic capabilities of the former, and was resolved to promote his advancement by every means at his command, although up to that

period Mr. Wigan had really done nothing to indicate the possession of that histrionic power which he has since displayed. During his stay at Boulogne Jerrold wrote that most charming of serio-comic dramas, "The Prisoner of War," and also the comedy of "Gertrude's Cherries," in which he introduced a character called Alcibiade Blague (a Frenchman speaking broken English), which he had studiously designed for Alfred Wigan, and was resolved that no one but that gentleman should play it. The piece was ultimately produced at Covent Garden Theatre, but with a degree of success which can only be pronounced moderate, although it was brim-full of the characteristic charms of Jerrold's dramatic muse, and Mr. Wigan achieved high distinction by his personation of the part so generously assigned to him.* "The Prisoner of War," which was produced at Drury Lane Theatre in February, 1842, met with a different fate, for it proved to be one of the most entertaining and effective pieces that ever came from Jerrold's pen, comprising as it did a delightful admixture of comedy

* It is difficult to conceive why this piece, with many others of the same author's productions, including "The White Milliner," "The Heart of Gold," &c., has not been published in the collected edition of Jerrold's comedies and dramas.

and pathos, and being performed by such artists as Mr. Phelps, Mr. James Anderson, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Selby, Mr. Morris Barnett, Mr. George Bennett, Mr. Keeley, Mrs. Keeley, Miss Fortescue, Mrs. C. Jones, Mrs. Selby, &c. It is not a little singular that, proud as Jerrold was and had reason to be of this admirable work, he never saw it played—at least during its first season; but he always expected, he said, that the result would prove as gratifying as it did; for the sentiment was homely and truthful, and there were two characters in the piece—Peter Pall Mall and Polly Pall Mall, brother and sister—represented by Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, which were sufficiently diverting to insure a successful ordeal for even a less meritorious work.

The reference to this drama in particular naturally leads to the consideration of Douglas Jerrold's dramas in general; and I cannot but think it a source of national regret that such thoroughly original and legitimate productions as "Time Works Wonders," "Bubbles of the Day," "The Rent Day," "The Schoolfellows," "The Housekeeper," "The Wedding Gown," "Doves in a Cage," "The Prisoner of War," "Retired from Business," &c., should not be occasionally revived on the metropolitan stage, for the

charm of reading them is so great that one yearns to see them assume a substantial form and colour. Setting aside the more important plays in five acts—"Time Works Wonders"* and "Bubbles of the Day"—it has always appeared to me that Jerrold's dramatic works are the best efforts of his genius, combining as they do the most concise and salutary plots, and an infinite knowledge of the secret springs of character, with the most terse, yet impressive, dialogue; and it is certainly sad to think that "Black-Eyed Susan" (the extraordinary merit of which, strange to say, he could never be induced to admit) should be the only one of his pieces which holds its due position before the public, while encouragement is given to a class of composition which never did, and never can, belong to the "literature" of the drama. It may be said that Jerrold's plays would not "draw" in these times of sensational effect. Might not the attempt be made at a theatre presided over with a taste which distinguished the management of the Olympic in Madame Vestris's

* When Jerrold first told me he had finished this comedy, he called it "School-girl Love," and I made free to remark that I did not think the title sufficiently imposing for a five-act play.

time, and where the *dramatis personæ* could be as ably sustained as are the characters in Mr. Robertson's monosyllabic comedies at the Prince of Wales's? "Oh! wad some power the giftie gi'e us" to witness the execution of a design which would be as elevating to the stage as it would be honourable to the manager who should undertake to carry it into effect! Jerrold's dramas still "live," but, unhappily, not in the full knowledge of those who would rejoice in becoming more practically acquainted with them than they can possibly be through the unaided process of *reading*.

To return to the domiciliary habits of Jerrold at his little cottage at Boulogne-sur-Mer. In the simplicity of his heart (for it is a trite proverb that the greatest minds can find pleasure in the smallest diversions) he had a most amiable predilection for giving juvenile parties—that is to say, parties consisting of his two daughters and certain of their school companions; and on those occasions he included in the programme of the evening's amusement "acting charades," in which the principal performers were himself, Mr. and Mrs. Wigan, and M. Bonnefoy, the preceptor of his three boys. With what impulsive delight he entered into the spirit of those entertainments may be imagined by those who are not unmindful of the energy

he displayed when subjecting himself to the ordeal of the stage; and they may also conceive the intelligent zeal and earnestness with which Mr. Wigan (who was then patiently awaiting the chance of showing the "metal" that was in him) performed his part in the extempore representations. But the greatest charm of all to be found in those merry *soirées* was gathered from the graceful agility of the juvenile ladies, who would commence a dance in the drawing-room and continue it in the garden, under the light of the moon—"sweet mistress" of the ceremonies, as she was "of the sky." The entire bevy of young damsels being dressed in white muslin, the effect of their evolutions, as they tripped round the green sward at the back of the house, was certainly suggestive of a scene from one of those ever-captivating fairy stories, which are the delight of age no less than of youth, and which, it is hoped, may always recur to us at our seasons of rejoicing. Many years have elapsed since those happy times, and I have often reverted to them with a memory full of gratitude for the enjoyment I then experienced, and have asked myself the question, "Will such days or nights ever come to us again?" Or is it that, by some singular ordination of Providence, we are prone to look

at the past with a higher sense of thankfulness than at the present? In any case, I shall ever be keenly alive to the conviction that at no period of my career have I partaken of more unalloyed pleasure—more innocent and healthful amusement, than I enjoyed under the "roof-tree" of Douglas Jerrold, at Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Some years afterwards Jerrold rented a cottage in the neighbourhood of Herne Bay; and there also I received, under similar circumstances, his most agreeable hospitality; but, blessed as he was with all those domestic comforts which sufficed to gratify his moderate aspirations, the absence of that picturesque element belonging to the French watering place prevented his indulging that perfect *abandon* which he felt under the sunny skies of the Pas de Calais. Still he was ever the most pleasant and attentive of hosts, as Mrs. Jerrold was the most thoughtful and considerate of housewives; and it was noticeable that, so cunningly did the former arrange his few hours' work by rising early in the morning, that he never seemed absent from his guests, who were often somewhat numerous at that time. Plans would be arranged daily for drives or pedestrian excursions to Margate or Canterbury, or to some sequestered nook

lying far away in the country; and on those occasions Jerrold would infuse new life into the party, by his never-ceasing glee, and by the rapidity with which he seized every possible opportunity of "tuning his merry note" to the utterance of a jest or anecdote that sprang out of the conversation, or from some fleeting material which his quickness of perception had enabled him to discover by the way-side.

One of the most agreeable and most memorable of the excursions now referred to was a jaunt by private conveyance to Whitstable, the object being to eat oysters fresh from the sea. The party on that occasion consisted of Jerrold, John Leech, Henry Mayhew (who was then engaged in the preparation of an English dictionary on a very elaborate scale, and had taken up his abode in a quiet, rural spot, with a view to pursuing his labours), Kenny Meadows, and myself. The oysters were pronounced to be such as "nobody" had ever tasted before; and as they were supplied to us at less than half the cost that they have reached of late years, the quantity consumed was sufficient to justify a general recourse to some obviously-smuggled Schiedam, which caused us all to smack our lips with approving gusto, and

which found such charms for one of the party (who shall not be described by name), that he achieved the feat of imbibing, on the return journey, under a scorching July sun, the contents of a full flask. And he lives to tell the tale! That he did not present himself at dinner that day may well be believed; and much did he lose by his absence, for Jerrold was in one of his most humorous moods, and managed without any abnormal effort to keep the table in a roar; but, it must be confessed, at the expense of our valiant spirit-drinker, whose prowess had rendered every allusion to his name a source of unavoidable merriment. It was during Jerrold's residence at Herne Bay that he conceived and planned many of the best-known emanations from his pen, including "The Chronicles of Clovernook," already referred to; and other attractive contributions to the "Illuminated Magazine," which had been started not long previously under his auspices and those of Mr. Ebenezer Landells, the engraver. The duty of sub-editor was assigned to me, and in that capacity I was called upon to be the medium of communication between the artists and the authors, and to supply the former with wood-blocks as well as subjects for their work. The practical responsibility of arranging the contents of each number also devolved upon me; and,

as this brought me in contact with contributors who preferred addressing me to inflicting their correspondence upon the editor, Douglas Jerrold, I often received letters which possessed an interest beyond that of the passing moment. I copy the following as an example of the unreserved manner in which a writer will place his confidence in one who, if he does not occupy the "editorial chair," has immediate access to it. The letter is from a gentleman who had already published two successful novels, and has since written others of corresponding ability and power:—

"Nottingham, May 2, 1844.

"Dear Sir,—Will you be kind enough to ascertain whether the last story I sent to Mr. Jerrold is acceptable or not? I observe myself absent again this month, or you would not have been troubled. But the fact is I am one of those unlucky dogs to whom the pen is a dependence,—precisely the same thing, you know, as saying my life hangs on a thread; and, therefore, it is of importance to me—that is to the extent of the bread-basket—to avoid delay as far as possible in the publication of such papers as may have the luck to meet with approval, or, if not, to have them returned as early as may be convenient.

"I feel entire reliance upon Mr. Jerrold's kindness and consideration for my excuse in making these re-

marks, because he knows too well how much, at the very best, must be endured by any one like myself and thus situated. But whether, on that account, we deserve any more consideration than your happy and flourishing amateur penman, who feels sufficiently paid by seeing himself in print, is a question upon which, of course, I can offer no opinion.

"Believe me, very sincerely yours,

"CHARLES HOOTON."

As I could not always be present when Jerrold was arranging the contents of the number for the ensuing month, his practice was to send me word by letter the names of the articles he had chosen, and which he desired should be next in order of publication. The following will serve to convey some idea of the fairness with which he dealt out his opinions upon papers submitted to his editorial judgment. It will be seen that the letter refers to an illness from which I was then recovering, and to other matters of a personal nature, but the main object of his writing was to direct my attention to a decision he had come to respecting contributions he had received for the "Illuminated Magazine."

"Sept. 9.

"MY DEAR HODDER,—I write after hard morning's work, so write *short*. I'm happy to hear you're re-

covering. I have no doubt that among us we shall be able to make you some little amends if the San. [Sanatorium] should fail.*

"'The Dwellings of the Poor' goes in this month. Hoskins *not at all.*

"If you return in about ten days, 'twill be time enough for index. The Mag. is rising. I have been worked to death for *Punch*, having it all on my shoulders, Mark,† à Beckett, and Thackeray being away. Nevertheless, last week it went up 1500.

"Yours ever truly,

"D. J."

Some of the best papers that Jerrold ever wrote for serial publications appeared in this periodical: "Elizabeth and Victoria" (a comparison between the social customs and vices of the two reigns); "The Order of Poverty;" "The Old Man at the Gate;" "The Two Windows;" "The Folly of the Sword;" and, above all, "The Chronicles of Clovernook," which he composed under the disadvantage of seriously impaired health. During the progress of that work he was attacked by rheumatism in so aggravated a form that

* The Sanatorium, or Home in Sickness—an institution of which I was then secretary; and further mention of which will be found in another part of this volume.

† Mark Lemon, the editor.

I frequently saw him propped up in bed while he prepared a chapter which the printer's boy was waiting below to receive; and it was really touching to observe the patient endurance he betrayed when engaged in an occupation which necessarily increased the pain he was suffering. Whether his sensibilities were quickened by the sad condition he was reduced to, or whether his mind had become so thoroughly imbued with the subject he was treating, that even pain could not prevent his fulfilling his purpose, it is not for me to say; but certain it is that during that long and severe illness the most poetical thoughts ever kindled in the brain of Jerrold were laid before the world. The body was weakened by suffering, but the light within was unquenched, and the results of his mental vigour at that crisis forcibly illustrate the truth of a theory which he advocated, whenever he heard of any extraordinary achievement by a contemporary whose advanced age would seem to render such achievement impossible—that "Genius never dies."

Indeed, so weak and emaciated had poor Jerrold become at that time that many of his friends began to have serious misgivings as to his ultimate recovery; but (as he was often heard to exclaim

in after-days) he took counsel with himself one morning as he endeavoured to rise in his bed; and when he thought of what he had done, and what he hoped to be still capable of doing, he said, "No—I am *not* going to die." That he uttered these words with the same emphasis and vigour which characterize the ejaculations of Uncle Toby in the "Story of Lefevre" can hardly be suggested; but he was certainly a man of stern resolve; and he felt that his health gave signs of improvement, and that he was not doomed to end his days thus prematurely. But whether his health had improved or not, such was the dominant force of his will that he determined to undergo the ordeal of the cold-water cure at Great Malvern; and he allowed himself to be carried from his bed to the conveyance that was in readiness to remove him from his home. He was absent, I think, about three weeks; and on his return his health, though not perfectly restored, was much invigorated, for the root of the disease seemed to have been destroyed, and he was capable of resuming his literary labours and the editorship of the "Illuminated Magazine," which, as he had reason to believe, was "rising" in circulation.

The principle upon which this magazine was con-

ducted afforded an illustration among the many which came within my knowledge of the exceptional readiness shown by Jerrold to allow young authors, who had never before "seen themselves in print," to make their *début* under his editorial auspices. There are many writers now holding prominent positions before the public whose names were totally unknown, either to fortune or to fame, until Douglas Jerrold, with a vivid appreciation of the merit that was in them, gave them an opportunity of starting on the career they aspired to. The pages of the "Illuminated" were generously thrown open to "all comers" whose contributions presented sufficient evidence of talent to Jerrold's discriminating eye; and, what is more, he permitted them to affix their names to their articles if they were so disposed, for he could not see the justice of one all-powerful writer keeping his own name prominently forward while those of his *collaborateurs* were suppressed.

The "purpose" of the "Illuminated Magazine," as stated by Jerrold in a preface to the first volume, is thus described:—

"It has been the wish of the proprietors of this work to speak to the MASSES of the people; and whilst sympathizing with their deeper and sterner

wants, to offer to them those graces of art and literature which have too long been held the exclusive right of those of happier fortunes."

That the magazine contained many articles especially adapted to the "masses" can scarcely be averred, nor was Jerrold's style of writing (at least in those days, when he had not yet thrown himself into the arena of newspaper controversy) such as could be said to appeal successfully to the comprehension of the "great uneducated;" but his heart and sympathies kept him their firm champion, although his nature was so fastidious that his friends were often known to say to him—"Jerrold, you're a thorough aristocrat in the main."

The magazine came into existence in the month of May, 1843, and terminated its career at the close of the third volume (each volume extending over a period of six months). The final number contained the following :—

"POSTSCRIPT BY THE EDITOR.

"With this number closes the third volume of the 'Illuminated Magazine,' and with it close the duties of the present editor. In the progress of his task he has received so much pleasure and encouragement from the sympathies and best wishes of many, that

he cannot lay down the pen without thus formally acknowledging them. Trusting that the brevity with which this is done will not impugn its sincerity, the editor—as editor—bids his readers a respectful farewell; but not without the hope of again meeting them in these pages.

"DOUGLAS JERROLD.

"Sept. 27th."

The limited career of this work was doubtless owing to its unwieldy size, for it can scarcely be supposed that a monthly periodical, whose page presented almost as many superficial inches as that of the *Illustrated London News*, would be regarded as a convenient form for the ultimate operation of binding. The work was admirably printed; the illustrations were engraved by E. Landells, and designed by the best artists of the day in this branch of the pictorial art, including Kenny Meadows, Leech, Hine, Prior, Harvey, Henning, Gilbert, &c.; the letter-press comprised some of the most readable productions of the day, both in poetry and in prose, and, above all, one of the leading attractions was the series of papers by the editor, under the title of "Chronicles of Clovernook," which, as previously stated in this volume, Jerrold estimated as his masterpiece in descriptive and

imaginative writing. It is abundantly clear, therefore, that the cause of its downfall must not be looked for in the contents, but in the unwillingness of the reading world to be diverted from the more handy magazines to which it had become familiarized.

CHAPTER III.

The Origin of *Punch*—First Contributors to that Periodical—John Leech's First Cartoon—*Punch's* Original Prospectus—Edward Mayhew's Books on the Horse and the Dog—The Mayhew Family—Jerrold and Van Amburgh—Henry Mayhew's Lectures, and Books of Practical Usefulness.

I MUST now revert to the period of Jerrold's residence at Boulogne-sur-Mer, because it was at that time that the hebdomadal *Punch* was ushered into the world, and Douglas Jerrold was one of its earliest contributors. But so clearly has Blanchard Jerrold detailed the circumstances of his father's connexion with *Punch*, and the nature of his first contributions to that periodical, that I shall make no attempt in this place to do more than relate what I know, from my own experience, of the origin and inception of the work. The projector of *Punch* was unquestionably Henry Mayhew, and, although the fact may not be regarded by its thousands of readers as a matter of very grave importance, I

shall offer no excuse for briefly dwelling upon it, because doubts have been expressed, not only amongst the uninformed, but amongst those who might be supposed to be acquainted with the subject, as to the individual to whom the merit is justly due. The question has repeatedly been brought upon the *tapis* in every-day conversation; and it has been quite amusing to note the self-confident manner in which quidnuncs and that aggressive class of people who may be called the know-everything section of the community, have described circumstantially all the particulars of the "identical meeting" at a tavern near Drury Lane, at which *Punch* was started! The *starting* of *Punch* was undoubtedly the result of many meetings; but its *origin* was the result of Mr. Mayhew's personal cogitations, as already stated; and, not to say it vain-gloriously, it happened that I was the first individual to whom he mentioned the idea, simply because I was the first individual he saw (that is, in whom he could be expected to confide) on the day he disclosed it to his friends.

Henry Mayhew was then (the summer of 1841) living in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross; and as I chanced to be a near neighbour of his, an arrangement had been come to by which

I should visit him every morning; and I well remember that, for several weeks, we commenced the day at an early hour, in order that we might study "Euclid" together. One morning, on entering his sitting-room, I found Mayhew in unusually high glee (although his spirits were seldom at a low ebb), and I instinctively came to the conclusion that, as he was constantly bent upon the discovery of some "new notion," he was now about to exhibit his creative power under circumstances of an exceptionally propitious character. "I've a splendid idea!" he exclaimed, with an impulsive eagerness which showed that he had been anxiously wishing for the opportunity of opening his mind upon the subject. "What, *another!*" I exclaimed. "Delighted to hear it! What is it?"—or words to the like effect. "A new comic periodical," said Mayhew. "You know the French *Charivari*, don't you?" — "Yes," was the reply. "Well, my idea is to start a similar thing, called *Punch, or the London Charivari.*"—"Good!" said I. And we forthwith proceeded to draw up a list of the names of artists and contributors whom Mayhew suggested should be asked to associate themselves with the undertaking. The name of Gilbert à Beckett (an old friend and *collaborateur* of Mayhew's

in his works of a humorous and satirical character) was the first on the list, and then followed those of Douglas Jerrold, Mark Lemon (with whom Henry Mayhew was then in daily communication), Sterling Coyne, W. H. Wills, H. P. Grattan, and others. Suddenly, he or I, or both (but it is by no means material to the issue, as the lawyers have it), remarked that there was a clever fellow rejoicing in the *nom de plume* of "Paul Prendergast," who had recently shown much force of humour in "The Comic Latin Grammar," and who was then engaged in writing "The Comic English Grammar." To ascertain his baptismal name was the first step necessary; and we soon found it to be Percival Leigh, and that he was living in Chapel Place, Oxford Street.

It was arranged that Mayhew should write to Douglas Jerrold, and that I should assist him in obtaining the co-operation of the chosen writers and artists to whom we could insure easy access; but, above all, I was to seek out "Paul Prendergast," and offer him such terms as might tempt him to enrol his name among the contributors. I had no difficulty in seeing him (though he was busily occupied at his desk at the time), and on my telling him the object of my mission, he very prudently

said he had certain scruples about embarking in a publication without knowing something of its characteristics, and that he should be glad to have an opportunity of glancing at a copy before he could undertake to write for it. It could not be disputed that this somewhat uncommon piece of caution was perfectly reasonable; but when I took my departure I felt fully assured in my own mind that, as Mr. Leigh's reputation was yet to be established, and as his literary capacity appeared especially to indicate a quaintness of humour which must find a convenient outlet for its expression, his name would ere long be included among the adherents to *Punch*. Meanwhile, he conferred with his friend John Leech, who had illustrated his "Comic Latin Grammar," and the result was that "Paul Prendergast" and John Leech made their joint obeisance to Mr. Punch in the fourth number of his work, in an article called "Foreign Affairs"—the letter-press by the former, and the pictorial design (representing types of continental character, as seen in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square) by the latter.

But our immediate business is with the initiation of the weekly periodical, some particulars

of the birth of which cannot be otherwise than interesting, if not important, to a large portion of the public, hundreds of whom have been familiar with the work from its very commencement. Not much time had elapsed ere all preliminaries were settled, and the contents of the first number agreed upon. Archibald Henning (long since passed away) was to be the chief illustrator, and Ebenezer Landells was to have the superintendence of the engraving department. The principal contributors to No. 1 were Gilbert à Beckett, Sterling Coyne, W. H. Wills, H. P. Grattan, Mark Lemon, and Henry Mayhew, the last two being joint editors. The frontispiece on the "wrapper" was drawn by Henning, as was also the large cartoon (which, as it was the period of a general election, represented a group of "Candidates under different heads"); and the miscellaneous "small cuts" were executed, if I remember rightly, by an artist named Brine. The printer was Mr. Joseph Last, then of Crane Court, Fleet Street, who, together with Mr. Landells, was a shareholder in the speculation. The original prospectus of the work was as follows:—

WILL BE OUT SHORTLY,*

And continued every Saturday,

(Size of the Athenæum),

PRICE THREEPENCE.

A NEW WORK OF WHIT AND WHIM,

Embellished with Cuts and Caricatures.

TO BE CALLED

PUNCH;

OR,

THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

This *Guffawgraph* is intended to form a refuge for destitute wit—an asylum for the thousands of orphan jokes—the superannuated Joe Millers—the millions of perishing puns, which are now wandering about without so much as a shelf to rest upon! It will also be devoted to the emancipation of the Jew *d'esprits* all over the world, and the naturalization of those alien JONATHANS, whose adherence to the truth has forced them to emigrate from their native land.

The proprietors feel that the 'eyes of Europe' will

---

* Under this line was a small wood-cut, representing Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, and Lord Morpeth, who were then in office (the first being Prime Minister), but were expected to be "*out* shortly."

be upon them—that every visible animal, like our political patriots, will look out for

No. 1.

'Punch' will have the honour of making his first appearance in this character on Saturday, July 17, 1841; and will continue, from week to week, to offer to the world all the fun to be found in his own and the following heads:—

Politics.—'Punch' has no party prejudices; he is Conservative in his opposition to Fantoccini and political puppets, but a progressive Whig in his love of *small change* and a repeal of the union with public *Judies*.

Fashions.—This department will be conducted by Mrs. J. Punch, whose extensive acquaintance with the *élite* of the areas will enable her to furnish the earliest information of the Movements of the Fashionable World.

Police.—This portion of the work will be under the direction of an experienced nobleman—a regular attendant at the various offices—who, from a strong attachment to 'Punch,' will be in a position to supply exclusive reports.

Reviews.—To render this branch of the periodical as perfect as possible, arrangements have been made to secure the critical assistance of John Ketch, Esq., who, from the mildness of the law, and the congenial

character of modern literature, with his early associations, has been induced to undertake its *execution.*

Fine Arts.—Anxious to do justice to native talent, the criticisms upon Painting, Sculpture, &c., will be confided to one of the most popular artists of the day —'Punch's' own immortal scene-painter.

Music and the Drama.—These will be amongst the most prominent features of the work. The Musical Notices will be written by the gentleman who plays the mouth-organ, assisted by the professors of the drum and cymbals. 'Punch' *himself* will do the Drama.

Sporting.—A prophet has been engaged! He will foretell not only the winners of each race, but also the 'vates'* and colours of the riders.

The Facetiæ will be contributed by the members of the following learned bodies:—

The Court of Common Council and the Zoological Society.

The Temperance Association and the Waterproofing Company.

The College of Physicians and the Highgate Cemetery.

The Dramatic Authors' and the Mendicity Societies.

The Beefsteak Club and the Anti-Dry Rot Company.

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* The name assumed by a Mr. Harrison, at that time the sporting correspondent of a daily paper.

Together with original humorous and satirical articles, in verse and prose, from all the

FUNNY DOGS WITH COMIC TALES.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS BY R. BRYANT, AT 'PUNCH'S' OFFICE, 3, WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND;

Where all communications (prepaid) for the Editors should be forwarded.

At length came the day of publication. It was Saturday, July 17, 1841 (for the system of issuing periodical works in anticipation of the date was not then the prevailing practice as it has since become), and Mr. Mayhew's thoughts and attention were directed, with inevitable anxiety, to the publishing office, from a desire to ascertain the progress of the "circulation." If the aforesaid Mr. Bryant be still extant, he will, doubtless, remember how frequently and eagerly Mr. Mayhew, or myself—sometimes both—applied to him to know the state of affairs in his all-important department. In short, it may be frankly stated that Mayhew and I walked up and down that part of the Strand leading from Wellington Street towards St. Clement's Church the greater part of the afternoon, discussing the prospects of the new undertaking, and the former

congratulating himself upon the success it was likely to achieve, as we continued to obtain fresh intelligence in respect to the number of copies disposed of.

As to the ultimate success of the work, it is only necessary for me to say that it struggled on manfully and cleverly for many months (its momentary dissolution being daily predicted by alarmists and "Job's-comforters"), but from the unfortunate obstacle caused by the want of capital, its promoters fell into difficulties, and, in order to save it from bankruptcy, the property was disposed of to Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, the present printers and proprietors, for a sum little exceeding the amount of Mr. Punch's liabilities, Mr. Landells still holding a small share, which, however, was soon bought up by the new authorities, and Mr. Lemon retaining the editorship, with Mr. Mayhew (who had yielded that post to him) as his auxiliary in the discharge of the somewhat essential duty of "thinking and suggesting."

From the above statement it is pretty clear that *Punch* was *not* projected at a tavern near Drury Lane Theatre, or at a tavern near anywhere else; that nobody but Henry Mayhew was the actual *originator* of it; and that the earliest con-

tributors to it did *not* comprise one-half, or even one-fourth, of the names which those, who delight in relating all they do *not* know, have been pleased to number among its fathers and godfathers and its multitude of literary offspring. It is an interesting though painful fact (because it shows that Death has been busy with the most loyal and distinguished allies of *Punch*) that there are now only three contributors to it, either in art or literature, who were connected with it from the first few weeks of its career—viz., Mr. Mark Lemon, Mr. Percival Leigh, and Mr. Horace Mayhew: the first-mentioned gentleman being the only one associated with it from its very commencement.

As I have incidentally mentioned the name of Horace Mayhew, I may here state that I made his acquaintance, through his brother Henry, some two years before the date of *Punch's* birth, at which latter period he was absent on a tour in Germany. It chanced, however, that he returned to this country before the first volume was completed, and in the course of a week or two he became an acknowledged contributor to the work, and was afterwards appointed sub-editor. That appointment he held for some considerable time, and in the discharge

of his duties was a medium of communication between the writers and the artists; but the office was eventually abolished as unnecessary, and has never since been filled up. Horace Mayhew's close connexion with *Punch* brought him to educate his mind for the particular form of literature to which that periodical belongs, and he was not only the suggester of many subjects (as, for example, "The Female Robinson Crusoe") which were handed over to the treatment of others more experienced than himself, but was the author of several popular works of a humorous kind, including "Letters Left at the Pastrycook's;" "Model Men," "Model Women," and "Model Couples;" "Change for a Shilling," &c., together with a remarkable piece of graphic drollery, illustrating "The Tooth-ache" in a variety of stages, from the commencement of the disorder to the final extraction of the offending member. This was published in the elongated roller form, and the designs, as well as the descriptive letter-press at the foot of each, were supplied by the author himself; but were afterwards drawn upon wood by the great George Cruikshank, who, however, declared that his rendering of the subject, although it might be somewhat more artistic, rather detracted than other-

wise from the singular merit of the originals. As I have been from the period of my first knowledge of Horace Mayhew on terms of uninterrupted friendship with him, it would not befit me to descant upon his characteristics, or to recall a succession of incidents connected with our constant intercourse—

> "What things have we seen
> Done at the ——! heard words that have been
> So nimble and so full of flame,
> As if that every one from whence they came
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest
> Of his dull life!"

Mayhew will not fail to remember how he and I, as "the boys" (so called) of the party assembled round Mr. Punch's dinner-table at the Saturday gatherings, before they were confined exclusively to the staff of accredited contributors, were frequently among the last to quit the agreeable scene; and how upon taking our departure, with something like a feeling of self-reproach at having been tempted to remain beyond the hour when Prudence usually goes to bed, Douglas Jerrold has consoled us with a favourite quotation of his from Gainsborough, Never mind. "We are all going to Heaven, and

Vandyck is of the company ;"* and how, when dining with Jerrold at his house on the following day, and reminding him of some of the flashes which his wit had sent forth, the latter has exclaimed, laughingly and half-incredulously, "No ! did I say that?" But I will refrain from putting to the test Horace Mayhew's remembrance of the "things we have seen," lest the retrospect should bring with it the reflection that they and the actors in them have too long passed away ; and moreover I might, peradventure, advert to subjects on which his impressions might not entirely harmonize with my own. I cannot, however, let this opportunity pass without recording my unfeigned sense of his kindly and affectionate nature, and of the esteem in which he is held by all who know him. In proof of his friendly disposition, I will here quote from a letter which I received from him on the occasion of that happy event of my life which has already been mentioned here :—

"I have sent to your house two little presents for Agnes—if she will be kind enough to accept

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* An exclamation made by Gainsborough on his death-bed, when he was visited by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

them. Assure her they are sent with the strongest wishes for her future happiness.

"She must look upon the lamp [a very handsome specimen of the 'moderator'] as an emblem of the light and cheerfulness that she will shed (with proper *trimming*, of course) around you; and the little Punch and Judy figures she must take up kindly in her arms as pretty images of affection from

"Her sincere friend."

The greatest of all poets has said—

> "The evil that men do lives after them;
> The good is oft interred with their bones."

Alas! too true. But I hope I commit no heresy in endeavouring to provide against such a fatality arising in the present instance.

This would seem a not inappropriate place for the introduction of an anecdote which Horace Mayhew relates concerning himself and Douglas Jerrold:—

So many stories have been told of the latter, in which his wit and repartee have appeared as the most prominent features, and his "bitterness" has been rendered far more bitter than he ever contemplated or could possibly be induced to acknowledge,

that I do not hesitate to bring his name forward under circumstances which will show that, with all his quickness and foresight, it was not altogether difficult to place him in a light by no means calculated to display his intellectual powers. Jerrold chanced, on an eventful evening in those times when agreeable entertainment might be found without resorting to music-halls and dancing saloons, to accompany Horace Mayhew to a public room at the West end of the town, where a large number of celebrities were assembled, consisting, for the most part, of men who were in some way known for their contributions to the varied amusements of the metropolis. Amongst them were Mr. Fitzjames, the actor, and Van Amburgh, the lion-tamer. The former, finding that Jerrold was present, and never having seen him before in such close proximity, whispered to Mayhew that he should be glad to be introduced to the well-known wit. Mayhew at once acceded to his wish, and said he would willingly gratify it the moment an opportunity arose. In the meantime Jerrold, hearing that Van Amburgh was in the room, observed that he had often been wonder-struck at the power and courage he had displayed in his treatment of wild beasts, and hoped that the evening might not pass without his becoming

acquainted with a man of such singular prowess. Mayhew, pretending that he was well known to the lion-tamer, at once undertook to introduce that redoubtable hero to Jerrold, when at the moment the thought struck him that here was a chance for a bit of innocent mischief at the expense of Douglas Jerrold. Accordingly, he "gave the wink" to Fitzjames, and, with an air of assumed diffidence, presented him to Jerrold as Mr. Van Amburgh.

"Very happy to know you, Mr. Van Amburgh," exclaimed Jerrold; "but I confess I am a little surprised to find you are a much smaller man than I had been led to expect."

"Oh," replied Fitzjames, "you must be well aware, Mr. Jerrold, that a man's height is very deceptive when he is seen on the stage. I am about 5 feet 8, but I know I look nearer 6 feet as I appear before the audience."

"At any rate," said Jerrold, "you have done marvellous things in your way, and I respect you for your utter fearlessness of danger."

"Not more than I respect you for your writings, Mr. Jerrold," replied the pseudo lion-tamer; "and you will not doubt me when I say that I am proud to become acquainted with a man of such great

mental power, for Nature has certainly not made you an athlete, in a physical sense, Mr. Jerrold."

"No," exclaimed Jerrold, "you are quite right, for the only athletic sport I was ever distinguished at was cribbage."

He then proceeded to make inquiries of the supposed Van Amburgh as to the means he employed to bring the most savage animals into subjection, and asked him whether he had ever tried his skill with other beasts than lions and tigers. "If I mistake not," he observed, interrogatively, "you have never had much to do with bears?" "Yes," was the reply, "I have more than once tested my pluck and patience with a bear, and even a wild bull I have made to fear me."

Now it happened that Mr. Fitzjames, under another name, had formerly been a member of the Stock Exchange, and being, therefore, well acquainted with "bulls" and "bears" in all their doings with humankind, he began to fear that the conversation was assuming a somewhat dangerous tone. Whether to persevere in maintaining the character which had been so suddenly and unexpectedly thrust upon him, or to declare himself at this moment *in propriâ personâ*, immediately became a matter of doubt with him, and he was

about to offer some trite remark respecting wild-beast taming in general, and his *own* skill (that is, the skill of Van Amburgh) in particular, when he involuntarily exploded with a cachinnatory sound, in which Horace Mayhew could not refrain from joining. And thus was the murder out! Jerrold—the vigorous writer and brilliant wit—had, with childlike simplicity, been imposed upon in a manner which somewhat wounded his pride; but he skilfully disguised the annoyance he felt, and he was so far amiable under it that Fitzjames had not much cause to regret that he had become known to Douglas Jerrold under such *lion-taming* auspices.

I think this may be regarded as a fitting opportunity for the introduction of the names of three other members of the Mayhew family—Edward, Julius, and Augustus; and I may here at once state that of the four brothers to whom I have now alluded, those who have appeared before the public under the designation of "the Brothers Mayhew," are Henry and Augustus, who were the joint authors of "The Good Genius that turned Everything into Gold," "The Magic of Kindness," "The Greatest Plague of Life," "The Adventures of a Young Monkey," &c. Edward,

the eldest of the four, who in the early part of his career achieved many successes by his dramatic productions and by his general contributions to periodical literature, was for some time the "Fine Arts" critic of the *Morning Post*, and was in other ways associated with journalism. Finding, however, that the pursuit of letters was not calculated to secure him that permanent position for public usefulness to which he aspired, he formed the manly resolution, at the age of thirty-five, to study the profession of a veterinary surgeon, and in the course of an almost incredibly short space of time, he obtained a professorship at the College. Having thus acquired a new experience, and having still retained his literary taste, he published a little work on the "Management of the Dog," which soon became a practical text-book. In process of time he brought his newly-acquired knowledge to bear upon the treatment of the horse; and issued an elaborate work, called "The Illustrated Horse-Doctor," which was followed by a kindred production, under the title of "The Illustrated Stable Management." Both these books proved him to be a most valuable authority upon the habits, diseases, and characteristics of horses; and it is not a little remarkable that during the time he was preparing them, and for some years

afterwards, he was confined to his room by a paralytic affection which rendered it impossible for him to walk; but his energy and perseverance never forsook him, and so well had he stored his mind with all that was essential to him in the task he had undertaken, that he supplied the great majority of the illustrations, as well as the letter-press. It happened, by the purest accident, that "The Illustrated Stable Management" came into my hands for review in a morning newspaper, and Edward Mayhew, learning from one of his brothers that the notice of the book was written by me, addressed me a letter, in which he said—

"I know how much I am indebted to your good feeling for the sentiments you have expressed concerning my book, and as an acknowledgment of the obligation, which, believe me, I am sincerely alive to, will you allow me to offer you the enclosed note?* I should not have imposed on you the trouble which it necessitates; but being absent from London, circumstances compel me to trespass on your good nature. I feel, while making this offer, I am presenting you with that which must be of small value to you; but will you kindly accept the gift as an emblem of gratitude?

* * * * * *

* To Messrs. Allen, the publishers, requesting them to hand me a copy of the work.

"I have a pretty place down here, in a pretty spot.* Trains run cheap during the autumn. Should you ever feel disposed for a week of cool, moist atmosphere, pray remember that both I and Mrs. Mayhew will endeavour to make you comfortable."

Poor Edward Mayhew! His physical strength was originally proportionate to his mental power; but for a period of fifteen years he was compelled to fight the battle of life with brains alone; and this he did with such success that he has gained for himself an enduring name. The circumstances of his death (which took place about eighteen months ago), were such as to show that it indeed behoves us "to bear the ills we have" with philosophic resignation. As already observed, Edward Mayhew was deprived of the use of his limbs for fifteen years. At the expiration of that time he suddenly rose from his chair, the wheels of which had afforded him the only means of locomotion,—and walked! The effect upon the nervous system was apparently too powerful for a constitution weakened by the very severe trial to which it had been subjected; and in the course of ten days he ceased to be!

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* The neighbourhood of Torquay.

In the designs for an improved form of stables, several of which are included in the "Illustrated Stable Management," Edward Mayhew was ably assisted by his brother Julius, who, being educated for an architect, and having always cultivated a taste for art, especially in regard to those principles which demand a perfect knowledge of perspective, was essentially qualified for the task; and a reference to the book will at once testify that, although never assuming the dignity of a professed artist, he skilfully and effectually carried out the views and intentions of the author. As, however, he has never aspired to be a "public character," I forbear to give to his name a prominence which I know he would immediately repel; and yet I must allude, for one instant only, to the pleasure I have many a time derived from his society on certain "tramping" expeditions with him and his brother Augustus, when, in our walks through the country, we have left the cares of the world behind us, and have made ourselves the happiest of mortals, by appreciating to the full the humblest means of enjoyment.

As to Augustus Mayhew (always familiarly called "Gus"), the youngest branch of the tree, one would suppose that he never knew what care was, so jocund

and light-hearted is he invariably found to be in the midst of his friends. He *can* be serious, very serious, when any strong sense of injury, either to himself or to an esteemed companion, or to any social cause which he has warmly espoused, has taken firm possession of him; but his unbounded good humour and world-defying friendliness have inevitably pointed him out as a man to whom Fortune's buffets and rewards would seem to be alike indifferent. As an artist, he is little known, though in his delineations of every-day scenes and characters he has betrayed much graphic and perceptive power; but as a writer he has abundantly shown, in his "Faces for Fortunes," his "Finest Girl in Bloomsbury," and "Paved with Gold" (commenced in the form of a serial, in conjunction with his brother Henry, who, however, retired from it after the publication of the first two or three numbers), that he unites the elements of a graceful fancy and a broad sense of the ludicrous in a manner which is not often seen. But it is in society rather than in books that his light shines brightest (as has been said of many men of literary distinction), for in the task of writing he is necessarily under some restraint, lest ideas should find their way to the public eye which are

only adapted to the private ear; whereas in conversation he is not compelled to "weigh his words before he gives them breath;" and hence he is enabled to indulge those peculiar modes of thought and expression which are amusing from their reckless originality, as well as from the keen insight they display into the follies and impostures of society. The fertility of his invention in the use of adjectives and similes, to give breadth and colour to a daring conception, is conspicuously seen in his account of a prize-fight in "Paved with Gold," which contains a sufficient number of suggestions to enable a writer in *Bell's Life* to improve and strengthen his eccentric vocabulary. As an example of the grotesque roughness of his humour I may mention an incident which has often been alluded to by those who witnessed it, as affording a remarkable specimen of his peculiar characteristics. An altercation had occurred between Augustus's friends and an insolent, domineering sort of fellow, who had threatened personal chastisement to his opponent, and seemed inclined to put his resolve into execution; whereupon the stalwart Mayhew, advancing towards him with clenched fist and distending his capacious form to its fullest proportions, exclaimed, "By gad, sir! dare to lay one finger upon

my friend, and in five minutes your wife and children shall not know you!" Whether or not the individual whose facial outlines were thus vehemently menaced was blessed with a wife and children it did not appear, nor was it a question which entered for one moment into Augustus's consideration, but the magnanimous character of the phrase had the desired effect, for the lion immediately ceased roaring, and the object of his wrath went away with a whole skin.

Before quitting this part of my recollections I should state, if it be not already understood, that to Henry Mayhew I am indebted for my first introduction to the society of men of letters; and that long since I became known to him, a change has come over his literary aspirations; for the ability he then displayed, as a writer of farces, and as a contributor to comic periodicals, he subsequently diverted into a widely different channel. This change has been exemplified in a series of lectures, called "What to Teach, and How to Teach it," and in his two valuable books, "London Labour and the London Poor," and "The Great World of London"—works which have rendered more lasting service to the community and to himself than could possibly be achieved by any exercise of fun or fiction, even from the most fertile brain.

I am sure I need offer no apology for the allusions I have made to the Mayhew family (a family better known to fame than many writers of loftier pretensions), for they are well aware of the kindly spirit in which every word is intended; and this volume, however imperfect it may be, would be infinitely more so were I to omit all mention of such intimate allies and friends.

It is interesting to note, in following the gradations of time, what singular transitions have taken place in the minds of men devoted to literary pursuits. When Douglas Jerrold wrote "Black-eyed Susan," it would have been difficult to believe that he would ever become the editor of a popular journal, such as *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* (a position which he occupied for five years, to the period of his death); or when Thackeray penned "The Yellow-plush Correspondence" in "Fraser's Magazine," that he would in after days "witch the world" as the writer of "Esmond," and "The Newcomes;" or when Henry Mayhew produced his farce of "The Wandering Minstrel," that he would eventually make himself known as an authority on social statistics, as he has done in his "London Labour and the London Poor."

CHAPTER IV.

The Chairmanship of the "Punch Club"—John Leech and "Bentley's Miscellany"—Leech's Friendly Offices—Anecdote of Sir Henry Webb—Albert Smith—His Connexion with *Punch*—Letters from Albert Smith—Sea-side Recreations with him—His Ascent of Mont Blanc, and Entertainment at the Egyptian Hall.

CLOSELY associated with Henry Mayhew, and linked with him in the authorship of a farce produced at the Haymarket Theatre, under the title of "But however——," was a very remarkable personage, who exercised considerable influence over his social life, and helped to preserve in him that train of thought which was necessary to "the career of his humour." This was Henry Baylis, the bare mention of whose name conjures up so many laughable reminiscences, that I feel tempted to put down the pen while I endeavour to realize once more some of the scenes in which he played a prominent part. Henry Baylis had been formerly a printer in an extensive way of business, and had been the proprietor of the "Monthly Magazine," a position which brought

him in contact with the acknowledged luminaries of the time, including Laman Blanchard and Douglas Jerrold; but having met with heavy pecuniary reverses, he was compelled to attach himself to the business department of journalism in the practical character of an advertisement agent. His intellect was far above such an occupation; but he was afflicted with a constitutional laziness, which prevented him from following any pursuit requiring close application; and moreover his losses, as the *owner* of a work, the contributions to which had cost him, he said, far more than any of them were worth, would not permit him to regard the profession of a man of letters with feelings of a very congenial nature. That he had all the ability to write was abundantly proved by sundry humorous pieces which he had published in his earlier days, and which he sometimes showed to his friends as a very exceptional favour; but he lacked the will and the power of application, and therefore remained content to sit in satirical judgment upon the works of others.

Considering that at the time I now speak of he was a frequent companion of Douglas Jerrold, it would be somewhat hazardous to say that he uttered the *best* things I ever heard; but it may be stated

fearlessly that he was the only man in my experience who was capable of drawing a sword against Jerrold; and though he could not boast the ready and pungent wit of the latter, his manner of advancing his opinions and his jokes produced an effect upon his auditors which was both novel and irresistible. One of his smallest flashes of merriment would set the table in a roar, while a stroke of wit from Jerrold would give him time and opportunity for evolving some piece of ludicrous extravagance even more laughable than that which had just preceded it. Indeed there are many of his constant associates still pointing their pens for the saying of sharp things, who will readily confirm my statement that, for broad, reckless humour, as contradistinguished from absolute wit, such as Jerrold's, he was certainly *sui generis*. None but himself could be his parallel, and in truth there were few who attempted to be, for whenever he encountered an opponent, he turned the laugh so completely against him that the latter was glad to retire from the contest. I cannot better convey an idea of the effect which Baylis's humour produced—at least upon myself—than by saying that his power of exciting his audience to the utmost tension of laughter was equivalent to that which was displayed by John Reeve and Tyrone Power

upon the stage. Before I saw John Reeve in the character of Marmaduke Magog, in the "Wreck Ashore," I had never known the actual *pain* of laughing, so successfully did that extraordinary actor employ the mirth-provoking faculty that was in him; and I have no hesitation in saying that I have many a time been affected in a similar degree by the inimitable drolleries of Henry Baylis. At the same time it should be observed that his joking was generally of a personal character, and that some of his most notable sayings were amusing from his supreme indifference to the feelings of the individual whom he made the subject of his ribaldry. At the alliterative style of humour he considered himself a perfect adept, and would look with a smile of contempt at any one who presumed to encroach on what he regarded as his exclusive domain.

One of his boon companions, whom he considered as remarkable for indolence as he was for his physical proportions, he dignified by the name of a "long, lazy, lusty lazzaroni;" and when shortly afterwards he heard an ambitious young gentleman call somebody a "fond, foolish flutterer," he gave him such a derisive sneer as could only convey the impression that he had better not dare to enter the field of com-

petition again. Meeting one night at a tavern two gentlemen whom, from their appearance and general conversation, he insisted were linendrapers, he hurled a few of his peculiar shafts at them, and they resisted the indignity in a manner which only stimulated him to renewed attacks. At length one of them was so entirely overcome, either by the fluid he had imbibed, or by the merciless "chaff" (for there is really no other word to express the meaning of the operation) to which they had both been subjected, that he suddenly fell from his chair on the floor. "Now, Sewell, pick up Cross!"* cried the imperturbable Baylis.

On another occasion, his sense of dignity (for he stood upon his dignity to an extent which was ludicrous to those who knew that it was only the remembrance of what he *had been* that kept it alive) was disturbed by the presence of a youthful scapegrace, whose physiognomy was of the mild and inexpressive order, but who was dressed in the highest style of decorative art. Baylis had marked this important personage as a fit subject for his ridicule, and upon his offering an observation which struck him as not

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* Sewell & Cross — the name of a most respectable firm of drapers in Compton Street, Soho.

being sufficiently respectful to his "seniors," he said he must protest against the language of the young gentleman "with a foreign waistcoat and a domestic countenance!"

Henry Baylis was, by general consent, the elected chairman at the Saturday dinners of the *Punch* conclave, when the meetings took place at a well-known tavern near Drury Lane Theatre, and when many of his droll utterances were thought so good in themselves, or so suggestive of what might be *made* good by a practised dealer in jocularity, that he was put upon the "free list" of the periodical, and he received a copy of it every week to the time of his death. The "chief nourishers" in the feast were a plain joint of beef or mutton, and an apple-pudding ("pudden," our chairman persisted in calling it), and great was the amusement he was wont to create by carving the former in a manner which implied that he understood the gastronomic powers of the several guests around the table. By way of a general climax to the evening's diversions, his practice was to summon the head waiter, and put some such absurd query to him as the following, which, it will be seen, partakes of the alliterative in its style. "Has Bockett * finished

* The name of the landlord.

blowing up Bob?" * Being invariably answered in the affirmative, he would imperiously order that Bockett be desired to attend; and on that respectable functionary making his appearance, some one in the party would politely invite him to take a seat. This he immediately proceeded to do; and thereupon Baylis, with the most ludicrous caricature of indignation, exclaimed, "What, sir! have you the impudence to sit down in your own house?" Poor Boniface, good-naturedly appreciating the joke (for he had become thoroughly accustomed to it), remained standing while the jocose chairman harangued him, in such a continuous flow of grotesque eloquence, upon the quality of his dinner and liquids, the extent of his accommodation, &c., that the entire company (which included, be it observed, the Tritons of a great comic periodical) were kept for not less

* Bob was the second waiter, and a most singular specimen of the genus he was. Amongst his many peculiarities it may be mentioned that, notwithstanding his head had been considerably shorn of its natural covering, he never wore a hat when engaged on the many little errands he performed in the neighbourhood; but whenever he had a few days' holiday (which occurred about twice a year), his only delight was to walk from the street, *with his hat on*, into the bar at rapid intervals, and, in his gracious loyalty, order something "for the good of the house"!

than half an hour in an uninterrupted roar of laughter, as he alternately pulled and puffed at his tobacco-pipe, and uttered some violent absurdities at the expense of the unoffending landlord, whose innocence, real and assumed, added materially to the effect of the joke.

Those were evenings of unalloyed pleasure, as Douglas Jerrold, John Leech, Albert Smith, Kenny Meadows and others, who were invariably present, always gladly admitted long after they were discontinued, and it may be hoped that since Mr. Punch's gatherings have been of a more conventional character, he has sometimes found laughter as contagious and as triumphant as it was when Henry Baylis (*Mister* Baylis, as he bombastically insisted on being addressed) presided over his convivial assemblies.

The following lines, which appeared in *Punch* in the month of January, 1843, and were written by Percival Leigh, are amply sufficient to indicate, at least to those who know something of Greek and Latin, the locality of Mr. Punch's symposia, and even the name of the hostelry where they took place:—

SODALITAS PUNCHICA, SEU CLUBBUS NOSTER.

Poema Macaronicum, vel Anglo-Græco-Canino-Latinum.

Sunt quidam *jolly dogs*, *Saturday* qui nocte frequentant
Antiqui Στέφανον, qui stat prope mœnia Drurî,
Βουλόμενοι saccos cum *prog* distendere *rather*,
Indulgere jocis, necnon Baccho atque *tobacco ;*
In mundo tales non *fellows* ante fuere :
Magnanimûm heroum celebrabo carmine laudes,
Posthac illustres ut vivant omne per ævum.
Altior ἐν Στέφανῳ locus est, *snug cosy* recessus;
Hîc *quarters* fixêre suos, conclave tenent hîc,
Hîc dapidus cumulata gemit *mahogany* mensa.
Pascuntur variis ; *roast beef* cum *pudding of Yorkshire*
Interdum; *sometimes* epulis queis nomen agrestes
Boiled leg of mutton and trimmings imposuere.
Hic *double X* haurit, *Barclay and Perkins's* ille;
Nec desunt mixtis qui sese potibus implent
Quos "*offnoff*" omnes consuescunt dicere *waiters.*
Postquam exempta fames *grubbo*, mappæque remotæ,
Pro cyathis clamant, qui *goes* sermone vocantur
Vulgari, *of whisky*, *rum*, *gin*, *and brandy*, sed et sunt;
Cœlicolum qui *punch* ("erroribus absque") liquore
Gaudent; et pauci vino quod præbet Oporto,
Quod certi *black-strap* dicunt *nick*nomine Graii.
Haustibus his *pipi*, communis et adjiciuntur
Shag, Reditus, Cubæ Silvæ, *Cheroots* et Havannæ.
"Festinate viri," *bawls one*, "nunc ludite verbis:"
Alter "Fœmineum Sexum" propinat, et "*Hurrah!*"
Respondent, *pot-house* concusso plausibus omni.
Nunc similes veteri versantur *winky* lepores
Omnibus, exiguus nec, Jingo teste, tumultus
Exoritur, quoniam summâ nituntur opum vi
Rivales ἄλλοι *top-sawyers* ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.

Est genus ingenui lusûs quod nomine *Burking*
Notum est, vel *Burko*, qui claudere cuncta solebat
Ora olim eloquio, pugili vel forsitan isto
Deaf Un, vel *Burko* pueros qui *Burxit;* at illud
Plausibus aut fictis joculatorem excipiendo,
Aut *bothering* aliquid referentem, constat, amicum.
Hôc parvo excutitur multus conamine risus.
Nomina magnorum referam nunc pauca virorum:
Marcus et Henricus,* *Punchi* duo lumina magna,
(*Whacks* hic Aristotelem, Sophoclem *brown walloppeth* ille)
In *clubbum* adveniunt; Juvenalis† et advenit acer
Qui veluti *Paddywhack for love* contundit amicos;
Ingentesque animos non parvo in corpore versans
Tullius;‡ et Matutini qui Sidus *Heraldi* est
Georgius;§ Albertus Magnus;‖ vesterque Poeta.¶
Præsidet his Nestor,** qui tempore vixit in Annæ,
Creditur et vidisse Japhet, non *youngster* at ullus
In *chaff*, audaci certamine, vinceret illum.
Ille jocos mollit dictis, et pectora mulcet,
Ni faciat, *tumblers*, et *goes*, et pocula *pewter*,
Quippe aliorum alii jactarent forsan in aures.

An important accession to the pictorial strength of *Punch* was realized in the introduction of Mr. H. G. Hine, who made his *entrée* in the pages of that periodical in the month of September following the date of its commencement. Mr. Hine had been known to Mr. Landells through his illustrations to the

* Mark Lemon and Henry Mayhew. † Douglas Jerrold. ‡ J. H. Tully, the composer. § G. Hodder (at that time connected with the *Morning Herald* newspaper). ‖ Albert Smith. ¶ Percival Leigh. ** Henry Baylis.

"Cosmorama" and other publications; and although he was professedly a landscape-painter, and had no more experience of drawing *on* the wood than a stanch teetotaller has of drawing wine *from* it, he was at once thrust into a prominent position as an artistic contributor to *Punch's* columns. His chief speciality consisted in the grotesque ideas which he developed, with much facility, in the small cuts; but he soon proved himself capable of greater things, and it is not a little remarkable that he executed the whole of the illustrations to *Punch's* first Almanack, with the exception of the border pieces, which were the work of Hablot Browne. Mr. Hine has long since abandoned the duties of a comic artist for the more congenial pursuit to which he originally intended to devote his talents, and he is now a conspicuous member of the Institute of Painters in Water Colours —his charming representations of *downy* scenery, dotted with sheep, and relieved by little villages which would seem to have dropped into pleasant valleys designed expressly to receive them, being always amongst the chief attractions of its annual exhibitions.

Mr. Birket Foster, another "knight of the brush," rather than of the pencil, also made certain contribu-

tions—though not many—to the early numbers of *Punch;* but they were of a character which showed him to be eminently *un*fitted for the task of delineating *facetiæ.* He was, however, a pupil of Mr. Landells at the time, and it was natural that the latter should test his qualities by every means at his command; but Mr. Foster did not suffer many years to elapse ere his name became famous in a very different branch of art to that which *Punch* would have marked out for him, and I have referred to him in this place merely by way of showing the diversity of artists whose works have ornamented the pages of the favourite periodical.' Among the earlier illustrators, besides those already mentioned, were Alfred Crowquill, Newman, Lee, Hamerton, John Gilbert, William Harvey, and Kenny Meadows. The first frontispiece, as I have stated, was by Archibald Henning; the second was by Harvey; the third by Gilbert; the fourth by Meadows—the practice during the first few years of *Punch's* existence being to commence a new wrapper with each succeeding volume; until at length Richard Doyle appeared upon the scene, and it was thought that the grotesque, yet graceful, contribution which he supplied was far too good to be thrown aside at the expiration of six

months. The proprietors of the work, therefore, very wisely caused Mr. Doyle's frontispiece to be stereotyped, and it now remains, with certain modifications, the permanent tableau on the outer covering of *Punch*.

It will be seen from the above enumeration of names that, in the early stages of Mr. Punch's career, he gave encouragement to artists who evinced no qualifications for humorous art; but the frequent changes he made led to a state of things which showed that he was only desirous to place the right man in the right place. It certainly could not be said that William Harvey, the graceful and poetical illustrator of "Knight's Pictorial Shakspere," was ever intended for a *Punch* artist; and as to John Gilbert (also an able illustrator of the great poet), so impressed was Douglas Jerrold with the solid character of his academic forms and imposing outlines, that he exclaimed, "We don't want Rubens on *Punch!*" When Mr. Tenniel first associated himself with the popular periodical, it was generally thought that his abilities were of too classic an order for the duty he had undertaken; for it will be remembered that this gentleman executed one of the cartoons for the Houses of Parliament (an allegory of Justice), which

gained a prize at the exhibition in Westminster Hall; and that he once represented on the walls of the Royal Academy a striking picture of "Adam and Eve in Paradise." Such un-*Punch*-like subjects as these, and such un-*Leech*-like treatment as they required and received, were by no means suggestive of comicality in the artist; but Mr. Tenniel had too much confidence in the pictorial strength he possessed to feel that he need limit himself to a particular sphere; and hence he persevered with his pencil, until in time he became inoculated, as it were, with a sense of humour which has not been subordinate to, but has served to stimulate, his graphic powers. It may be remarked that Mr. Tenniel's introduction to *Punch* was in consequence of Mr. Doyle's withdrawal from the scene of his many successes; and it is no secret to state that, by the course adopted by the latter, he sacrificed a handsome income rather than remain attached to a publication which had satirized the religion he professed.

Valuable contributors to the amusements of the table, as they were to the pages of *Punch*, were John Leech, Albert Smith, and Kenny Meadows—the two former having been on terms of intimacy long before that work was established; but my desire

is not so much to speak of them in reference to their doings for *Punch*, as to indicate what manner of men they were in relation to the "small sweet courtesies" of life. It was through John Leech's friendly intercession that I first became a contributor to "Bentley's Miscellany" (in the year 1848), to which publication he was then a fixed adherent. I had written a little story, and on my submitting it to Leech's opinion, he was kind enough to tell the authorities, with the utmost earnestness, that, if the paper should be accepted, he would gladly illustrate it. The result was that it was published, with an admirable etching by Leech, and was followed the next month by another, which also was touched by his artistic hand. Leech's friendliness and good-fellowship were well known to those who understood his reserved, unostentatious nature; and having adduced one proof of those qualities in him, I may fitly mention another, though I honestly wish it had reference to somebody other than my perpetually-recurring self. In the illustrations to a little book, called "Sketches of Life and Character, taken at the Police Court, Bow Street," he rendered me most essential service by the exercise of his inimitable pencil; and I know that, in like manner, he lent a "helping hand"

(in more than one sense of the term) to many a young aspirant in whom he felt an interest, and who appreciated the importance of securing the aid of his valuable name.

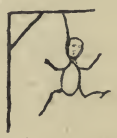
In the *Punch* times to which I have adverted, it was the habit of Albert Smith to call him familiarly and brusquely "Jack," while his still more intimate friend, Percival Leigh, addressed him as "John," or "Leech," and this was so repugnant to Jerrold's taste and feelings, that at length he exploded with the following pertinent query: "Leech, how long is it necessary for a man to know you before he may call you *Jack?*" No reply; but if my recollection serves me, "Jack" was sounded in our ears much less frequently on subsequent occasions.

The leading members of the Club were anxious, at a particular period, which I cannot call to mind with sufficient accuracy to be relied upon, to insure on a given evening an exceptionally large attendance; and I, as the honorary secretary, addressed a letter to John Leech, amongst others, requesting his presence. In reply he sent me the following note, with no signature; but in its stead a grotesque figure, such as my artistic skill is just advanced enough to enable me to copy:—

"9, Powis Place.

"My dear George,—I have an appointment with Sir Robert Peel to-morrow, at about 3 o'clock;* but I dare say I shall be able to get away in time to join you at the dinner. Indeed I may say I *will* come.

"Yours faithfully,



"G. Hodder, Esq., S.R.P.C."

The extraordinary prices realized at the sale of Leech's Sketches after his death, even for the roughest outlines, amply testified to the high esteem in which his works were held by the public.

John Leech used to tell an amusing anecdote of Sir Henry Webb, whose tall military figure and aristocratic head were at one time as familiar in the stalls of the theatre, especially on "first nights," as were the rubicund countenances of Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence and the late Sir George Wombwell in the omnibus-box at the Italian Opera House in the

* Sir Robert was then Prime Minister; and albeit I should be doing an injustice to both minister and artist by saying that this was "of course" a joke, I am bound to state that it *was* a joke, though not perhaps of the highest order. But look at the grand tableau!

Haymarket. Some one had informed Sir Henry that a terrible murder had just taken place in the metropolis, and that the culprit had not yet been apprehended. Sir Henry appeared, or affected to be, deeply interested in the matter; and at once proceeded to make inquiries, his deep, heavy voice giving due solemnity to the questions he put. "Dear me! another murder!" he exclaimed; "and what sort of murder?" Answer—"A poor girl shot by her sweetheart." "Dear me! dear me!" said the distressed gentleman. "Girl shot by her sweetheart! Dreadful! dreadful! And when did it take place?" Answer—"Yesterday morning." Sir Henry—"God bless me! Yesterday morning! Is it possible?" Answer—"True; the girl was murdered yesterday morning, and by a fellow who was supposed to be her lover." Sir Henry—"Dear me! dear me! very shocking, indeed! And at what time yesterday morning?" Answer—"Between six and seven o'clock." Sir Henry—"Gracious goodness! Between six and seven o'clock! What an early hour! Very awful! very awful! And what was the cause of the murder?" Answer—"Jealousy." Sir Henry—"Jealousy! Heaven defend us! Horrible indeed! Jealousy! And what was the girl's name?" Answer

—"Martha Jones." Sir Henry—"Dear me! dear me! Martha Jones! More and more shocking! And the murderer, what was his name?" Answer—"Philip Brown." Sir Henry—"Philip Brown! God bless me! Philip Brown! this is bad indeed! Well, well, well! Martha Jones shot by Philip Brown! And where was the murder committed?" Answer—"In Rosamond Street, Clerkenwell." Sir Henry—"Great Heavens! In Rosamond Street, Clerkenwell! How very extraordinary! God bless me! In Rosamond Street, Clerkenwell! *Then we must bear it as well as we can!*" The locality was too much for his weak nerves; but Sir Henry partook of a grand supper immediately afterwards, and on the following morning he had forgotten all about poor Martha Jones and Rosamond Street, Clerkenwell.

Among the many little domestic gatherings to which the meetings of the *Punch* contributors gave rise, none were more agreeable or more memorable than the dinner-parties at John Leech's house—first at Powis Place, and afterwards at Notting Hill and Kensington. In one notable instance within my recollection, Leech had invited some ten or more gentlemen, consisting chiefly of his fellow-labourers in the establishment of Mr. Punch, to dine with him

in Powis Place, and he had engaged for the occasion the services of an extra attendant, whose ordinary occupation was not that of the traditional "greengrocer," but that of a parish clerk. The guests were assembled in the drawing-room, *selon le règle*, preparatory to the banquet; and it was at length observed that there was an unusual delay in announcing the dinner. This was all the more noticeable, because John Leech's household arrangements were generally conducted upon the best principles of order and regularity; and the guests were one and all in such high intellectual vigour, and so well prepared to enjoy "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," that they began to fear they should exhaust their stock of mental ammunition in a succession of skirmishes before the evening's war began. Whether the parish clerk had disconcerted the cook by the solemnity of his presence, or whether the latter, being of a serious turn of mind, was afflicted with a tender sensation which upset her culinary calculations, it was never clearly ascertained; but there could be little doubt that there was something not quite right between the kitchen and the dining-room. After a somewhat significant pause, however, a solemn figure, attired in black, and wearing a white necker-

chief of most orthodox character and proportions (in a clerical point of view), appeared in the room, and in a style of elocution which would have well befitted his calling in the church, gave the welcome announcement, "The dinner is on the table!" "Amen!" cried the assembled guests, with corresponding solemnity; and one and all descended to the dining-room, tittering at the comically doleful manner in which so important a preliminary to an enlivening entertainment had been carried into effect.

John Leech possessed among his many excellent qualities, that of a fine bass voice; and the gentlemen of the *Punch* conclave will remember how often, in the midst of their rejoicings, he diverted their thoughts from the humorous to matters of more serious moment, by singing Barry Cornwall's song, "King Death was a rare old fellow." On one occasion, when he had sung this song with even more than his usual vigour, Douglas Jerrold exclaimed, "I say, Leech, if you had the same opportunity of exercising your voice as you have of using your pencil, how it would *draw!*"

Not a very novel or brilliant witticism, perhaps; but those who are prone to trace every joke of recent times to the much-abused pages of Mr. Joseph Miller,

may possibly be disposed to admit that it was, at least, cleverly applied.

Albert Smith's connexion with *Punch* arose from the fact of his being known as a successful writer in a comic periodical, called the "Cosmorama," then in course of publication under the auspices of Mr. Last, the printer; and his first contributions to the new work consisted of "The Physiology of the London Medical Student" (which, however, had already been written, in brief, by Paul Prendergast, in "The Heads of the People"). He continued for a long time to be a zealous and valuable member of the literary staff, and certainly wrote many of the most entertaining descriptions of English social life which appeared in *Punch's* columns at a period when the contents were better adapted to the million than they have been in later days. But it was more particularly in regard to the "Illuminated Magazine" and "Bentley's Miscellany" that I came in contact with Albert Smith, and he was always found to be a writer on whose promises editors and publishers could implicitly rely. He was a most frank and agreeable companion among those whose idiosyncrasies he relished; and the following letters will show that he could be as kind and friendly as he was frank and cheerful. The

first refers to the period when I was about to visit Paris at the time of the revolution, and Albert Smith had promised to get me a letter of introduction from Charles Kenney to Jules Janin, the dramatic *feuilletoniste* of the *Journal des Débats;* the second is an answer to a note I had sent him, asking him to contribute an article to, I think, the "Illuminated Magazine," upon the subject of Chamouni, which then occupied a great deal of his time; and the ostensible object of the third (addressed to me when I was at Boulogne) was to express his regret that he could not give me an opportunity of supplying one of the papers to "Gavarni in London," an ephemeral affair, of which he was the editor.

"My dear George,—In case I do not see you, I enclose Kenney's letter of introduction (for you) to Jules Janin. I think the number is 20 [Rue Vaugirard], but if not, any one in the neighbourhood will tell you. It is close to the Odéon, and near my old home, '*en étudiant.*' Now to my own business. I have put in a letter for Markwell,* which you will perhaps be good enough to give him; and also a copy of 'Tadpole;' and a letter I will thank you very

* William Markwell, a much respected wine merchant, and formerly well known for the interest he took in dramatic literature.

much to deliver. The family live at Capecure, just over the bridge. You cross the bridge, turn to the right, and then it is the second house to your left. Altogether it is not five minutes from the Hôtel du Nord. I hope the book will not cumber your carpet-bag. If they *should* say anything at the Douane (which they will not), show them the writing on the title-page, and say it is not a new one—that will be enough. I hope you will have a jolly time, singing 'Mourir pour la Patrie.'

"Yours always,

"Albert Smith."

"Your letter about Chamouni followed me to all sorts of places. I was, however, too much occupied with collecting matter for my 'Mont Blanc' book, to undertake anything else.

We had great fun, and the inundation caused much excitement. I suppose you saw Russell's account of it in the *Times*.

"In a hurry, yours always,

"Albert Smith."

"I wish we had been nearer to one another, as I could to-day have put one of the Gavarni papers into your hands. But the next number winds up the work; and he is such a queer customer that I never know until the last minute what subjects he has fixed upon, and then everything has to be scrambled up by whoever I can put my

hand upon. I shall be heartily glad to wash my hands of it. We somewhat envy you at Boulogne. London is miserably dull just now, and everything flat as ditch-water, including, I am sorry to say, books. I have kept back my next 'Act' till December, things were selling so badly.

"I have a slight notion of going into farming!! Don't laugh—and with Joe!!!* Don't laugh again—not believing in literature as a permanency. We think of renting a cheap slip of Jane C——'s land, at —— Hill Park, and building pig-styes, keeping fowls, &c. I don't mean, of course, to give up London, or rush into any heavy agricultural speculations, but I think we shall be able to turn a few coppers in the course of the year at a small risk. I would sooner make a pound by selling a porker than write a page of 'Bentley.'

"Last night I met Thackeray at the Cyder Cellars, and we stayed there until three in the morning. He is a very jolly fellow, and no 'High Art' about him.

"Old Brough has bought the *Man in the Moon* of Ingram; and Angus† has a serial out on the 1st —a heavy, melodramatic, go-ahead story. Horace

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* Joseph Robins, the now popular comedian, but in those days a gentleman enjoying more leisure than employment.

† Angus B. Reach—one of the foremost contributors to the periodical literature of that time. The serial referred to was a romance, called "Clement Lorimer, or the Book with the Iron Clasps."

Mayhew is in the agonies of the Almanack,* in which I have been helping him. It is an open opposition to 'Punch's Pocket-Book.' I wish they could get it out first.

"Let us have a line now and then, when you have a chance; and believe me, with best regards to all friends." * * *

In one of the above letters it will be seen that Albert Smith speaks of "envying me at Boulogne;" and I am thus reminded that some of my most agreeable reminiscences of him revert to a time when he and his brother Arthur, and Joseph Robins, were enjoying together a few weeks' stay in that town. Being by good luck on a visit there myself at the same moment, I saw Smith and his two companions daily; and rather than mingle with the noise and confusion of that restless watering-place, we preferred an exclusive diversion of our own. This consisted in our meeting on the sands in the morning, and paddling to one of the little villages which lie along that part of the coast. This was Albert Smith's favourite enjoyment at Boulogne;

* George Cruikshank's "Comic Almanack." H. M. was also associated with a publication called The "Almanack of the Month," a clever little serial, nominally edited by Gilbert à Beckett, but suggested and put together by the former.

and the many pleasant illustrations he gave us of the "whims and oddities" of life, as seen in his own experience, were ably seconded by the practical humour of Joe Robins, who already indicated the possession of that innate sense of drollery which has since been successfully developed on the stage. So warmly attached was Albert to Boulogne before he became thoroughly imbued with that Alpine spirit which led him constantly to Chamouni, and ultimately to the summit of Mont Blanc, that in one of his fugitive pieces he wrote a tribute to its merits and attractions, from which I give the following extract as a characteristic specimen of his style :—

"In contradistinction to the imaginary enjoyment of other watering-places, let us take the pleasant, careless Boulogne. It has been customary to deride this new key-hole to the Continent; to joke about the mobs who fly there, like the ships, for a harbour of refuge; to allude to stags and sharpers, and broken incomes—in fact, to throw every possible slur upon it and its inhabitants. And yet there is no place in the world where really pleasant relaxation can be so readily procured, and at such a cheap rate. You will be told by its enemies that Boulogne is now quite an English town. Don't believe them. What is there English in its gay, lively port, and lines of smart hotels—its thorough continental Rue Neuve Chaussée and *moyen-âge*

Upper Town—its *poissarde* population, with their short red petticoats and naked legs or blue stockings—its hundreds of glittering white caps in the *Place* on market-day? Walk a mile away from it in any direction, towards Wimereux, Wimille, or Portel, and you will see as much of France as though you had been right across it from Boulogne to Besançon. Where will you show us such a glorious stroll as that along the cliffs to Ambleteuse, with the sea and the picturesque rocks and Martello towers so far below you, and literally in sight of home all the way, if the day be but moderately clear?

"There is no *ennui* at Boulogne, because there is no conventional observance of rules of deportment. Everybody does what he likes, not what he thinks he ought to like. And if you wish it, there is a charming private society. In fact, Boulogne is fining down to exceeding respectability; for it has become a trifle too expensive for the outlawed tribes, and they have emigrated, many, we believe, to Calais."

Apropos of Albert Smith's ascent of Mont Blanc, and the deservedly popular entertainment which sprang from it, I shall here introduce a burlesque form of invitation sent by him to his friends on the occasion of opening or reopening what he boldly called "the show." This may possibly have been published before; but if so, I cannot very justly be charged with "piracy," for I have never yet seen it except in

its original form; and as it was addressed to me personally, I hope I may be allowed to deal with it according to my own inclination. In the first place, however, let me state that I chanced to dine in Albert Smith's company at the Cheshire Cheese, in Fleet Street, on the evening before he started from London on his journey to Chamouni. His animal spirits were tuned to a high key, and he spoke in rapturous terms of his intended visit; but I had not the least idea that he proposed to do more than spend a few weeks at his favourite resort.

"Off to-morrow morning!" he exclaimed; "and I shall make the ascent of Mont Blanc in a day or two."

"Bold thing to do," I said, "for a man who has not been in training, and you are rather heavy for a mountain climber."

"Never mind," he replied. "Pluck will serve me instead of training; and I haven't the slightest fear."

When I afterwards shook hands with him I cordially wished him a "*bon voyage*," and the next time I saw him he had written his story of Mont Blanc, and was preparing his entertainment.

The following is a literal transcript of the document just referred to:—

"We, Albert Smith, one of Her Britannic Majesty's representatives on the summit of Mont Blanc, Knight of the most noble order of the Grands Mulets, Baron Galignani of Piccadilly, Knight of the Grand Crossing from Burlington Arcade to the Egyptian Hall, Member of the Society for the Confusion of Useless Knowledge, Secretary for his own Affairs, &c. &c. &c.

"Request and require in the name of His Majesty the Monarch of Mountains all those whom it may concern, more especially the Police on the Piccadilly Frontier, to allow George Hodder to pass freely in at the street-door of the Egyptian Hall, and upstairs to the Mont Blanc Room, on the evening of Saturday, Dec. 1, 1855, at 8 P.M., and to afford him every assistance in the way of oysters, stout, champagne, soda and brandy, and other aid of which he may stand in need.

"Given at the Box-office, Piccadilly, 28th day of November, 1855.

"ALBERT SMITH.

"God Save the Queen!

"*Vu au bureau de la Salle. Bon pour entrer Piccadilly, par l'Arcade de Burlington.*

"TRUEFITT.

"Samedi, 1st December, 1855.

"*Viséed* for the Garrick and Fielding Clubs, the Vaults below the Houses of Parliament, Truefitt's Hair-cutting Saloon, the Glacier de Gunter, Jullien's, Laurent's, the Café de l'Europe, Pratt's, Limmer's,

and all other places on the Rhine, between Rule's Marine Museum, or Appetizing Aquarium, and the Jolly Grenadier public-house, No. 1, Ellison Square, Pall Mall, South Sebastopol.

"RULE.

"*Notice.*—By the recent police enactments regulating large assemblies in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly, this passport must be considered as available *for one person only*, and does not include the 'friend' who has always been dining with the bearer."

Albert Smith made few enemies, but many friends, and his name is invariably alluded to amongst them in terms which sufficiently show that his loss, as a quick-witted, lively companion, still continues to be felt. Indeed it may be said that, apart from his merit as a pleasant and humorous writer, he occupied a position as a public "entertainer" which has never yet been worthily filled.

CHAPTER V.

Kenny Meadows and Thomas Moore—Meadows's Illustrations to *Punch* — George Cruikshank's Advocacy of Teetotalism — Cruikshank at a Supper with Costermongers — His Picture of Fagin in the Condemned Cell—Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine—The French Revolution of 1848—Visit to Paris with Jerrold at that Period—John Poole, the Author of "Paul Pry"—Father Prout and the Paris Correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*.

I HAVE already alluded more than once, in the course of these memories, to the name of Kenny Meadows, and I now recur to it in order that I may give it that prominence for which my long association with him, irrespective of his artistic merits, will, I am sure, furnish a sufficient excuse.

Of Kenny Meadows I had much experience in his domestic life; and in that position he was invariably as communicative as he was cordial, ready at all times to repeat anecdotes of great men whom he had known familiarly, and to relate many of the interesting vicissitudes of his own chequered career. William Godwin, the author of "Caleb Williams," he

had met as a social companion; and "Tom Moore" he had seen in the poet's own drawing-room, practising a song at the pianoforte; and he was particularly struck with the bright, dapper, *unpoetic* look of the little man, as he sat there *en déshabillé*, and he was much gratified at the very polite manner in which he received him.

Meadows's written, but not published, account of this interview was to the effect that he had been requested by the Messrs. Longmans, of Paternoster Row, to wait upon Moore—then living in Duke Street, St. James's—with a letter, which he was enjoined to place in his own hands, and not to come away without doing so. The poet was from home when the artist first knocked at his door; and hence the latter, pursuant to the instructions he had received, "wandered about to kill time" (to use his own words). On his presenting himself at the house a second time, the servant informed him that Mr. Moore had just come in, and he was ushered upstairs. "The little exquisite" had pulled off his boots, and, to Meadows's astonishment, he displayed flesh-coloured silk stockings—a piece of vanity which would excite much less surprise, now that the biography of the poet has become known. He politely handed a chair to his

visitor, and begged him to be seated while he wrote a reply to the note the latter had delivered to him. This task accomplished, Moore made some complimentary allusion to certain illustrations Meadows had recently published; "but," says the latter, in describing the interview, "if I could have looked into the seeds of time, and have known the poet's subsequent criticism upon my drawing of 'The Peri,' I would have damaged his curly black head for him."

Meadows was essentially valuable to *Punch* for the thoughtfulness of his designs—as exemplified, for instance, in "Punch's Letters to his Son," "Punch's Complete Letter Writer," and many of the "cartoons," which were intended to portray something more than a burlesque view of a current event or a popular abuse. The quiet, unostentatious way in which he worked at his art, too often under the most adverse and discouraging circumstances, and the pride he displayed when he felt that he had made a "happy hit," was somewhat like the enthusiasm of a youth who had just attained the honour of a prize. As a draughtsman, he never cared to be guided by those practical laws which regulate the academic exercise of the pictorial art; for he contended that too strict an adherence to Nature only trammelled him, and he preferred relying

upon the thought conveyed in his illustrations, rather than upon the mechanical correctness of his outline or perspective. Among the many ideas on which he congratulated himself, he often alluded to his design illustrating the blessings of peace, which he typified by placing a butterfly at the mouth of a cannon. This he rejoiced to think had preceded Sir Edwin Landseer's picture of "Peace," in which the distinguished royal academician represented a lamb in the same position that Meadows had given to the butterfly. It is hardly to be supposed that Sir Edwin Landseer borrowed his notion from that of Kenny Meadows; but the latter, not unnaturally, considered there was presumptive evidence in favour of the supposition.

Meadows was very fond of a quiet stroll into the country—as far as Hampstead or Highgate; both of which places had from long custom more charms for him than he could see in any other accessible spot within a short distance of the metropolis. Highgate, with its picturesque rural neighbourhood, was especially full of interesting associations for him; and he would frequently stop short at the entrance to some snug-looking residence—notably, for example, that of Mr. Gillman, once famous as the home of the poet Coleridge—and expatiate upon the public virtues and private cha-

racters of its former inmates, and upon events which had occurred therein during his own experience. In speaking of the Gillmans, he said the only reward they received for their hospitable conduct—(but it was a great one, added Meadows)—"was that of an immortality, for who would ever have heard of them but for their connexion with the great poet?" Meadows, in these our pleasant perambulations, was wont to speak of an old lady who kept the Lion and Sun hotel in that neighbourhood. This was a favourite resort of Coleridge, and the communicative landlady used to remark that he was a great talker, and "when he began there was no stopping him." Whenever she returned to the room, she said, after leaving it for a short time, he would still be "going on," and sometimes he made such a noise that she wished him further. Innocent grandam! Little she dreamt that in after time his "talk" would be treasured by the world as amongst the choicest fruits of genius!

Indeed, an afternoon's walk with Kenny Meadows from Camden Town, where he long resided, to Highgate, and an hour's rest at the Gate House, formed a most healthful recreation to me; for the benefit I derived from listening to my old friend on one of those

pleasant rambles seemed to bring back a link from the past, so amply stored was his mind with the recollection of events which had happened within his experience. But Meadows was not always the mentor or mere cicerone on these occasions; for he would sometimes be in a jocular mood, and not disposed to take a serious and retrospective view of things which he brought under my notice. I had told him that a few evenings previously I had visited a friend of his at Kentish Town, and that when the door was opened the whole of his family, numbering about twelve, stood in the passage! At once perceiving that there was something extremely ludicrous in the picture, Meadows turned it to account by observing that he pitied poor ————, for his children were so numerous you couldn't shut the street-door for them!

At the time of *Punch's* original gatherings Kenny Meadows was the Nestor of the party; and at this present writing he is, I have reason to believe, in a condition of health very little impaired by his advanced age, but is enjoying, at the close of a life in which he has seen too much that was bitter, the sweets of a Government pension, bestowed upon him by Lord Palmerston, for his poetical illustrations to "Tyas's Shakespeare."

By a natural association of ideas, the name of George Cruikshank seems to connect itself with that of Kenny Meadows, for there is not much difference in their ages, and both have spent the greater part of a long life in illustrating popular works by the exercise of an imaginative power which has always added strength and grace to the subject-matter they have undertaken to embody. It would be idle to remark that there is a great deal that is not common between them; but each has oftentimes given pictorial expression to an idea which the other would have been proud to conceive. There was a time when anecdotes were rife concerning George Cruikshank's *bonhomie* before he signed the teetotaller's pledge; but in the long lapse of years they have almost faded from the memory, and he is now as familiarly known as the enthusiastic apostle of temperance, as he is for the moral lessons he has taught in his designs.

"Now, this wont do!" he will exclaim if he meets an intimate friend who he can plainly perceive has *not* limited his libations entirely to cold water for the last few hours. "Do you see that house there?" —"Yes." "Ah," continues Cruikshank, "he was a worthy fellow who once lived there; but drink, sir, drink settled him, as it has done many a man."

—"Well, but *in moderation*," replies the individual thus admonished. "Moderation!" cries George; "don't talk to me about moderation; there's no such thing in regard to drink. Give it up entirely, as I have done, or it will give *you* up."—"Well, but you see——" "See!" rejoins the mentor, interrupting him. "Why, look at me. What do you think of that for an arm at seventy odd years of age" (extending his right arm and displaying it, as if about to strike a blow). "Where's the drinker who could show such an arm at the same age?" I once mentioned this fact to Kenny Meadows, after it had been told me by the person to whom it had occurred, and Meadows observed, laughingly, "Well, I have drunk my share in my time, and I am older than Cruikshank, and find nothing to complain of in my muscular power." But no one could, for a moment, gainsay the zeal and honesty with which George Cruikshank has devoted himself to the cause of teetotalism; and there cannot be a doubt that he has effected considerable good by his precept and example. Of the various public occasions on which I have seen Cruikshank in the exercise of his function as a disciple of total abstinence, I call to mind one instance, as quite sufficient to exemplify the pains he has taken to inculcate the virtue, despite

the severe test to which his patience has often been exposed. Some years since, when Henry Mayhew, in the progress of his work, "London Labour and the London Poor," had made himself familiar with the costermongers of London, that earnest writer presided at a supper given to the fraternity in a remote part of the East end. The only drink to be consumed was to consist of water and ginger-beer; and amongst the company at the principal table was George Cruikshank, who looked on with delight at the exemplary conduct of a body of men whom he had always been taught to suppose were the very opposite of teetotallers.

In the course of the evening a speech was delivered by the treasurer of the Costermongers' Society (the exact name of which I forget), and, on hearing this, the honest-hearted George began to think that it was time the costers were ranked among the public teachers, instead of being classed with the pariahs of society. Unfortunately, the ginger-beer bottles were convenient vessels for carrying something more potent than water; and there were certain individuals, seated in close proximity to the chairman and his redoubtable supporter, George Cruikshank, who had taken an opportunity of smuggling into the room, by means

of one of the said bottles, an alcoholic decoction of the same colour as *aqua pura.* This was of course entirely unknown either to the chairman or to Cruikshank, and when the latter, in addressing the polite assembly, congratulated them upon the happiness they were enjoying, "with nothing before them in the shape of drink stronger than water," great was his horror, just as he pronounced the last word in the sentence, at hearing a voice exclaim "How deuced weak!" The traitor was drinking gin under the very nostrils of teetotalism! The imperturbable Cruikshank said nothing, but the *look* he gave was intended to throw poison into the spirit! As to the eloquent treasurer, his connexion with the Society was not calculated to render much service to the cause, for it soon afterwards transpired that he had embezzled the funds entrusted to his keeping!

In the works of George Cruikshank there is a curious instance in proof of the fact that artists have often produced their finest effects by pure accident, when every attempt to attain the desired object by toil and care has failed. When the great George brought forth his remarkable figure of Fagin in the condemned cell, where the Jew malefactor is represented biting his finger-nails in the tortures of

remorse and chagrin, Horace Mayhew took an opportunity of asking him by what mental process he had conceived such an extraordinary idea; and his answer was that he had been labouring at the subject for several days, but had not succeeded in getting the effect he desired. At length, beginning to think the task was almost hopeless, he was sitting up in bed one morning, with his hand covering his chin, and the tips of his fingers between his lips, the whole attitude expressive of disappointment and despair, when he saw his face in a cheval glass which stood on the floor opposite to him. "That's it!" he involuntarily exclaimed; "that's just the expression I want!" and by this accidental process the picture was formed in his mind. The practical filling-up of the design was soon carried into effect, and the result is too well known among the masterpieces of Cruikshank's pencil to need any description from my humble pen.

I have elsewhere referred to Douglas Jerrold's editorship of the "Illuminated Magazine," and to his willingness at all times to afford encouragement to writers who had not yet established a name in literature. I will now give an illustration of the recognition he gave to contributors whom he had introduced to the world, and who had already gained

his confidence. Not very long after the extinction of the "Illuminated Magazine," Messrs. Bradbury and Evans (who by this time had so allied themselves to Jerrold that he seldom published anything except under their auspices) produced a monthly periodical, bearing Jerrold's name as the editor, with a desire to resume, as far as possible, the same character of articles for which the former work was especially distinguished. The new publication was called "Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine," and, when all preliminaries were settled, he addressed me the following note in reference to Dr. Hitchman, whose name I recall with much satisfaction :—

"Nov. 11th, '44.

"Dear Hodder,—I arrived back last night. My object in now writing is that you should speak to Mr. H. (I forget his name), the surgeon of Sanatorium, telling him that I have a magazine coming out on the 1st of January (the thing is *decided*), and that I shall be very glad if he will furnish an article of the same nature to his last. The matter must be of the *present day*, and social in its application.

"Yours truly,

"D. J."

I need not say that the wish of my correspondent was strictly obeyed by me, and also, I believe, by the learned doctor.

In the new magazine, which in point of size was the very opposite of the "Illuminated," Jerrold published his "St. Giles and St. James," "Twiddlethumb Town," and "The Hedgehog Papers;" but as I was in no way associated with him in regard to the periodical, I shall not attempt to enlarge upon its characteristics, further than to draw attention to a somewhat romantic incident which I communicated to him, and which it was his intention to introduce into that work if its career had not been prematurely brought to a close. It was some time after the "Shilling Magazine" was projected that a now deceased sister of mine, having lost her husband in one of the Indian wars, was about to return to this country. She had made her way from the seat of warfare to Calcutta, there to embark on one of the steamers leaving that city. Hearing, however, that a sailing vessel, under the command of one of her brothers, Captain Charles Hodder, was shortly to arrive at Madras, she prolonged her stay at Calcutta, and ultimately made her way to the former city. There she was detained several weeks, as she was resolved to return to England

in her brother's ship, and the money she expended in consequence of the delay was actually a matter of serious consideration, seeing that she had not long lost her husband, and that she would not be able to complete her pecuniary arrangements until her arrival in London.

At length came the day of sailing, and my sister (who had her only child with her, a boy some twelve months old) was the sole female passenger; but she was so overjoyed at the idea of returning home under the care and guidance of her own brother, that she was fully reconciled to her position, and indeed she felt some little compensation for the sad bereavement she had lately sustained. One evening, while still skirting the Coromandel coast, the vessel struck upon a reef, and my brother found that she was doomed to be a total wreck. Hastening down to his sister's cabin, and throwing his arms round her neck, he exclaimed, "Margaret, the ship's ashore, and I am a ruined man!" She never murmured, nor gave way to those hysterical shrieks in which the tender sex too often seek relief in their misfortunes, but affectionately embraced her brother, and implored him to hope for the best. She then placed what money she possessed at his disposal, and begged that he would

resort to it in case of need. Nor did she dream of deserting him, but was heroically resolved to remain with him whatever might betide. It was, however, unadvisable that she should continue on board that night, as there appeared to be no chance of saving the vessel, and the probability was that early in the morning the whole of the crew would be compelled to abandon her. The lady was therefore conveyed ashore with her child, and she lay on the beach all night under the shelter of a capacious umbrella. She had taken with her a necessary supply of provisions, and, from what I understood at the time, the natives endeavoured to steal them, for at break of day my brother, in surveying the spot by the aid of his telescope, saw his sister belabouring some two or three black fellows with a formidable weapon she held in her hand. But this is only a single instance of the courage and determination she displayed after the melancholy catastrophe, for the abandonment of the vessel was found to be inevitable, and my sister's exemplary fortitude was of great service to her brother in the strait to which he was unhappily reduced. So completely had she fixed her mind upon reaching England with him, that she accompanied him by the overland route (as he was compelled to expedite his return in order to

relate the particulars of the wreck to the owners of his vessel), and played a Christian woman's part towards him until she saw him in safety at her own fireside in London. On my recounting this little story to Jerrold some time afterwards, while sitting *tête-à-tête* with him at the Café de l'Europe, in the Haymarket, I found I had touched a chord in his sensitive heart; and when I came to the close, he exclaimed, thumping his hand upon the table, as was his wont when his enthusiasm was roused, "By G—d! that woman's a heroine! There's a sister for a brother to be proud of!" He then begged me to sketch out the details of the adventure upon paper; and I speedily did so. But, for the reason I have already described, his rendering of the story never appeared in print.

I have spoken of the agreeable intercourse I enjoyed with Douglas Jerrold on the occasion of my first visit to Boulogne—a seaport which, although it has been almost the fashion to regard it as an English rather than as a French watering-place, is, to all intents and purposes, as much a constituent part of the great empire of France as any other town lying between the straits of Dover and Paris. At the

period just referred to I had no thought of anything beyond pleasure and recreation; but many years subsequently I visited the same country again with my friend, under circumstances which partook chiefly of a business character. In such high esteem was the name of Jerrold held as the writer of the "Q" articles, which formed the political element of *Punch*, that in the beginning of the year 1848 some few gentlemen of small capital tempted him to sanction the starting of a weekly journal in the liberal interest, under the title of "Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper," himself, of course, the editor; and the revolution which drove Louis Philippe from the throne occurring shortly afterwards, it was suggested that a powerful impetus might be given to the undertaking by Jerrold visiting Paris, and writing in the midst of the popular disturbances a series of articles from ocular demonstration.

All arrangements being made for his departure, he proposed that I should accompany him, with a view to assist him by collecting material for the exercise of his pen; and we arrived in Paris a few days after the outbreak of the revolutionary movement. To describe the state of Paris at that extraordinary crisis would

indeed be idle, as the details have long become matter of universal history. But I feel bound to revert to that period because it affords me an opportunity of exhibiting a new phase of Douglas Jerrold's character, though at the same time I should state that the son has recorded in the biography already referred to—chiefly indeed from information supplied by myself—some particulars of the father's visit to the French capital. On our arrival in that metropolis many of the streets were rendered totally impassable by the barricades which had been raised throughout the city. The insurrectionary fury had been partially spent; but the whole populace was in a most disorganized condition; and so imminent was the danger of an *émeute* arising, that the National Guard were in arms at all hours of the day and night, and the peaceful portion of the citizens were constantly disturbed by the sounding of the *rappel*. In all the public places flags and placards were exhibited, presenting such inscriptions as "*Vive la Réforme*," "*Vive la Garde Nationale*." *A bas le Roi!*" *A bas Guizot!*" "*Vive le peuple!*" &c., while the universal cry was "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.*"

Amongst the many excitements in which the people indulged was that of planting, in the most frequented

streets, "trees of liberty," some of which manifested a disposition to grow, but the great majority were so choked by the surrounding paving-stones that they vainly struggled to exist. All this was abundantly visible to us during the first twenty-four hours of our stay in Paris; and Jerrold, having once satisfied his eyes as to the general condition of the city, would not have been at all sorry had he been compelled to return home on the day after his arrival. On the second day he sat down in an uncomfortable corner of our private sitting-room, in, if I remember rightly, the Hôtel Bedford, and penned a long letter for his paper; but gave little or no proof that he was writing from the scene of action. I saw, when he had despatched his parcel, that he had embarked in an enterprise which was not likely to yield a return commensurate with the outlay, and in the few subsequent attempts he made to fulfil his mission it was evident that his mind was not in his work. "After all," he more than once exclaimed, "I might just as well do this in Cheapside or Fleet Street;" and on my reminding him that I had accompanied him to Paris for the sole purpose of collecting "facts" for him, and that I was most willing to carry out that object, he said, somewhat angrily, "D—n the facts! I don't want facts." Whereupon I ex-

pressed my regret that I had ever left London, as I did not like the idea of being useless to him; and many a time, when I hastened back to the hotel after spending some hours in gathering valuable information, and thought I should please him by describing what I had seen or learnt, he received me with coldness, and emphatically declined to accept my proffered aid. I frequently reminded him that he had not yet delivered the letters of introduction, which he possessed, to Lamartine, Ledru Rollin, and other influential persons, either in connexion with the Provisional Government, or with some important public department; but he always evaded the subject, and said he was in no hurry to perform a task which he detested.

At length I found that he had abandoned all further idea of acting in the character of a "special correspondent" for his own paper, resting content to supply himself with a few miscellaneous incidents of a cursory nature, and retaining them until he should be seated at his own desk at Putney Common, where he then resided. In short, he was blessed with so many "aids to reflection" and enjoyment in his own English home that he could not brook the discomfort of writing in "strange nooks and corners," without

the accustomed implements of his calling, and far removed from those domestic influences which he often confessed quickened his impulses and chastened his understanding. The work he had embarked in was totally unsuited to him, and it was really grievous to notice the expression of his countenance, as, morning after morning, the post brought him a letter from his *locum tenens* in London, Mr. Frederick Guest Tomlins, complaining of his shortcomings, and urging him to return, or to act in a manner more worthy of his ambition and of the known reputation he bore. He felt himself, however, in the position of an irresponsible agent, and he thought it would have been just as little worthy of him to attempt that which he knew he could not successfully accomplish as to neglect the duty altogether; but at the same time he was reluctant to return to England until he had been absent a sufficient time to show that, at least, he had *tried* to fulfil the trust reposed in him. His plan, therefore, was to pass the morning in reading the French newspapers, and thus laying in a stock of material, either for his paper or for his weekly contributions to *Punch*, and to devote the remainder of the day to sauntering about the Boulevards, choosing a restaurant to dine at, and visiting a theatre in the evening.

In ordering his dinner his great fancy was for *quelque chose appétissante,* as he called the lighter form of *entrées,* and a bottle of Tavel—the latter because he said it was "the Frenchman's port," and it was lighter and dryer than our own. It must be confessed, however, that the bent of his genius did not lie in the direction of gastronomy; and though he well knew the difference between a *gourmand* and a *gourmet,* he had not the skill to order a dinner with a due regard to economy, either in reference to money or food, and the result was that the former was often unnecessarily expended, and the latter was much more plentiful than *recherché.* He had every desire to vary his place of entertainment; but if he could not procure his favourite Tavel he would not go a second time to a restaurant where that almost-exploded wine was disregarded. Although proud to be thought an Englishman, it was a source of annoyance to him to be treated as one, and he was apt to resent as an indignity any allusion to his being of the family of "John Bull." One day he essayed his taste and skill at the Café Riche, which was on a somewhat more extensive scale than the restaurants he generally patronized, and upon his asking for the *carte du jour,* the waiter roused his

anger to a high pitch by saying "*Il y a du bon rosbif aujourd'hui*" "Don't come to France to eat roast beef," he curtly replied: "plenty of that at home." And he never dined at the Café Riche again.

Thus the same spirit of discontent continued to pervade his actions during the few remaining days of his sojourn in the French metropolis; and it was by no means decreased as the morning of his departure drew near; for then he began to reproach himself for not having delivered his letters of introduction. I observed that his mornings were often disturbed by visits from John Poole, the author of "Paul Pry," who had for many years been living in Paris; and although Jerrold never distinctly told me the object of his seeking him, it was evident from the manner of the latter, and from a few broken sentences he muttered, that there was some cause for coldness between them. "Poor Poole!" he exclaimed one day, after receiving a visit from him; "he has not made the best of his chances in life." At another time he observed that Poole was never known to *say* a good thing; but that if an idea struck him in society he would "book it for his next magazine article." Amongst others who sought Jerrold's acquaintance in Paris was the Rev. Francis Mahony

("Father Prout"), and I had the gratification of meeting the two men at a little dinner-party at the residence of Mr. Thomas Frazer,* the correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*, on the Boulevard des Capucines. Even on that occasion it was noticeable that Jerrold was ill at ease, and was not much disposed to talk upon the subject which at that period naturally absorbed the attention of the community. Indeed, he constantly reflected, both in society and when alone, that his visit to Paris had involved a loss of time and money, and that, on his return home, he should not receive that hearty welcome from his fellow-workers on the newspaper which his public position would otherwise have led him to expect. When the morning came for his departure—about a fortnight after his arrival—he openly acknowledged that his mission to Paris had been a failure; and as he was arranging his portmanteau, he took therefrom a small packet, and, throwing it into the fire, said, "There are my letters of introduction!"

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* This is the kind-hearted man alluded to by Thackeray in his "Ballad of Bouillabaisse:"

"There's laughing Tom is laughing yet."

CHAPTER VI.

Revolutionary Times—The Wolf at the Door—Father Prout and Thomas Francis Meagher at a Dinner Party—Sir Joseph Paxton and his Design for the Great Exhibition Building in 1851—The 50th Anniversary of Jerrold's Birthday—The late E. H. Baily, R.A.—Jerrold's Last Illness and Death—His Funeral at Norwood Cemetery.

AS I had no particular call upon my time in London, and was anxious to gain all the experience I could of Paris and the Parisians in a state of revolution, I did not leave with Jerrold, but engaged an apartment *au cinquième* in the Rue de Grammont, trusting that Fortune and "the press" might enable me to turn the exciting events of the day to a profitable account. Fortune, however, was far less mindful of my necessities than I had hoped that fickle dame would be; and I often felt that "eternal want of pence," which, if it "vexes public men," as Tennyson says, certainly does not spare private ones. The *rappel* continued to be beaten day after day; the National Guard were constantly in arms, and Paris still remained *bouleversé;*

but this state of affairs helped me, in a very small degree, to put money in my purse; and I was sometimes reduced to a condition of impecuniosity which may be remarkably interesting in the pages of romance, but which is by no means so attractive when it comes immediately home to us as a stern reality. I cannot forbear to mention one little proof of the unsatisfactory state of my exchequer, because it serves to show that, if we meet our distresses with a smile, our better stars will sometimes turn the tide in favour of us. On two occasions I had no possible means of procuring a dinner, and was compelled to content myself with a halfpenny roll; but my frugal meal was not unaccompanied by a stimulating fluid, for, chancing to have in my possession a small bottle of sal-volatile, I mixed a due proportion of it with water, and drank it with much more relish than I should have done had I taken it as a medicine. I need not hesitate to confess that this Bohemian-like experience had not the effect of a depressing influence upon my spirits, but really caused me to laugh at the fantastic tricks which fate delights in playing us. I thought, however, that if I were doomed a *third* time to such a novel process of training, I should feel that Fortune had deserted me entirely, and that I must endeavour to find a home in

some more hospitable sphere. I therefore made my case known to Mr. Frazer, whose name I have just mentioned, and he not only assisted me with money, but actually asked me to dinner on that very day, when, without his aid, I should again have been compelled to limit my repast to dry bread and sal-volatile! This was, indeed, a providential stroke of luck, and when the evening came my thankfulness was increased by the fact that I met at the dinner-table two Irishmen of very diverse fortunes, but both possessed of marked ability, and both having connected themselves, in some shape, with the history of their country. These were Father Prout and Thomas Francis Meagher. The former, as was well known at the time, contributed letters to the *Globe* newspaper, and the latter had just come to France on a patriotic mission.* The state of affairs in revolutionary Paris was of course congenial to the feelings of that treasonous gentle-

* Thomas Francis Meagher (afterwards dignified by the title of "Meagher of the Sword") was one of a deputation, including Smith O'Brien, O'Gorman, &c., from the Irish people to the Provisional Government of Paris. This was in the month of April, 1848. In October of the same year, the confederates were convicted of high treason, and the sentence of death being commuted to transportation, Meagher broke his parole, and fled to America.

man, and hence he seemed perfectly at home in that city at the particular juncture alluded to.

As Mr. Meagher's subsequent exploits in America have long since made him a hero in military annals, I cannot reasonably be expected to give him a conspicuous place in a work which treats, for the most part, of far more peaceful gentry than he would care to be numbered with; and therefore, I need only say that his bearing was far too much like that of a gentleman to produce the least suspicion that even at that moment he harboured traitorous thoughts in his bosom; and he seemed proud to listen, with becoming reverence, to the wit and wisdom of his learned countryman. That dinner was the harbinger of brighter times with me, for on my calling on Mr. Frazer the next day, to thank him for his kind attention to me, he threw out a hint that if he could secure a few letters for the *Morning Chronicle* on the state of Paris, quite irrespective of the information he was himself expected to supply, he should be glad to submit them to the editorial judgment. I made no reply, but immediately went to work, and before Mr. Frazer's daily missive was despatched I had prepared a long letter, under the title of "Paris as it is," which he was kind enough to forward to London, and two

days afterwards I had the satisfaction of seeing the article in print. Other letters followed through the same friendly medium, and thus was I provided with sufficient funds to enable me to remain in Paris some weeks longer, and to eat my roll—*with butter on it.*

Although, as I have already shown, Jerrold's character at that time did not appear in a light quite so amiable as his friends could have wished, I had many a *tête-à-tête* with him which contributed much to my enjoyment, for Jerrold never shone to better advantage than when he was talking worldly wisdom to those who were glad to profit by what he taught them. Indeed, as a rule, he was an acceptable monitor, and did not give his advice in a patronizing or dictatorial spirit, but seemed to make himself tolerably sure that his words would at least be cheerfully received, if not, perhaps, fully acted upon It was during our stay in Paris that he said some of those "good things" which have since bestrewn the paths of literature, and as they have now become the common property of the reading and the talking world, I shall avoid the risk of repetition by quoting only one or two of his bits of wisdom, which might, not inaptly, come under the

category of "advice to young men." Talking of marriage, he said he would never advise a man to choose a wife on account of her intellect any more than for the sake of her money. "As to myself," he added, "since I have been married I have never known what it is to turn down my own socks." Speaking of young authors allowing their names to appear amongst the contributors to various publications at one and the same time, instead of concentrating their energies upon some work of an enduring character, he said, "Don't scatter your small shot." In allusion to the vice of getting into debt, he remarked that a man must be forgiven for procuring meat and bread upon credit, "but he has no right to do this sort of thing in the same way" (pointing to a bottle of wine which stood before him). On my telling him that I had just attempted a little story in verse, and that I should be glad if he could recommend it for publication, he said, "Why not *walk*, and tell the same thing in prose?" He once told me a little story, which, as it seems to have escaped the notice of those who have written about him, although it may possibly be known in some shape, I shall introduce here, especially as Jerrold used to say that the incident came within his own experience. A passenger, well-to-do in the world,

had fallen overboard at sea, and his life was saved by an Irish sailor who jumped in after him. As a reward for the trifling service which his preserver had rendered him, the generous passenger presented Paddy with sixpence! Whereupon the sailor, looking him full in the face, and scanning him from head to foot with a smile of supreme contempt, exclaimed, in a rich Hibernian brogue, "Be Jabers, it's enough!"

On the occasion of the first performance of Jerrold's comedy of "Time Works Wonders," I had the good fortune to occupy a seat in his private box, and I well remember his feeling of delight, at the close, when he contemplated the success he had achieved. A party of his friends had arranged to sup together at the Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, and as we walked thither from the Haymarket Theatre I offered him my hearty congratulations, for I had never witnessed a "first night" which was more fruitful in agreeable results than that of "Time Works Wonders." Arrived at the door of the hotel, I could not help repeating the gratification I felt at the author's well-merited triumph, when Jerrold, turning his eye full upon me, and smacking his chest with his hand, exclaimed, with a degree of exultation which was most natural under the circum-

stances, "Yes; and here's the little man that's done it!"

"Time Works Wonders" was indeed a work for the author to be proud of, for we have had no piece in modern times so bristling with wit, so varied in character, and, withal, so interesting yet simple in plot, as this really admirable comedy. Why it should so long have remained unrevived is a question which I fear involves some reflection upon those of our managers who are guided by a desire to encourage the "legitimate drama"—a phrase which, I take it, is intended to signify the drama of intellect, as contradistinguished from the unhealthy creations of a vitiated taste.

As the offspring of eminent men must be admitted to bear a degree of interest in the eyes of the public proportionate to that which attaches to their parents, I may here take the opportunity of introducing some further mention of Douglas Jerrold's family, my object being to show that he was keenly alive to the necessity for seeing his children occupy a favourable position in the world. Edmund Douglas, his second son, received an appointment in the Treasury from Lord John Russell, and was afterwards transferred to an office in the Commissariat. Thomas Serle

Jerrold (godson of Mr. T. J. Serle, the dramatist), the third son, was placed under the care of Mr. Paxton (afterwards Sir Joseph), at the Duke of Devonshire's estate at Chatsworth, with a view to his learning the art of gardening; and it was during young Tom's apprenticeship that his able instructor made his design for the Great Exhibition Building in 1851. On the opening of the Great Northern Railway to that part of the world where Chatsworth is situated, I was instructed by the editor of a paper with which I was then connected, to take the journey, and to describe such objects of interest as might appear on the route, and particularly to direct my attention to the beauties of the Duke of Devonshire's seat. I placed myself under the guidance of Mr. Paxton, who received me with great courtesy, and after pointing out to me all the principal charms of the garden grounds, conducted me at length to a spacious conservatory which he had designed, and which was then approaching completion. It was built exclusively of iron and glass, and when Mr. Paxton had described the improvements it embraced over other structures of the like kind, he said he was then finishing a design upon the same principle for the contemplated building in Hyde Park. Having

led me up a steep flight of stairs into an office in the garden, where several young men were engaged in preparing architectural plans, he called my attention to the drawing he had spoken of, and said, "That's the design I intend for the Great Exhibition."—"But surely you're too late," I observed; "for the designs have already been sent in, and are now being exhibited." "I don't mind that," he replied, "they must have this. Look at the economy of it, and consider how short a time will be required to erect the building." The result is far too widely known to need another word from me; but I have recalled the circumstance because the newspaper article I wrote at the time contained the first public mention that was ever made of the Great Exhibition Building of 1851.

It was in the following year that Edmund Jerrold received his appointment in the Commissariat, and as he was under orders to proceed to Canada his father and mother gave a little ball in his honour on the eve of his departure. Being a young gentleman of somewhat graceful proportions, and not a little proud to exhibit himself to the best advantage, he wore his uniform on the occasion, and was of course a very conspicuous object during the evening. In short,

his glittering appearance was almost calculated to monopolize the attention of the lady visitors; and his father being anxious that he should distinguish himself in some way beyond that of displaying his elegant costume, hoped, when his health was proposed, as it was in due course, after supper, that he might make a speech which would be considered "an honour to his family." When Edmund rose, champagne-glass in hand, to express his acknowledgments, he seemed so full of confidence, and presented so bold a front to the assembled guests, many of whom were standing in clusters around the room, that his father must have thought he had a son of whose oratorial powers he should doubtless one day be proud. The young officer, however, had scarcely got beyond the words "Ladies and gentlemen, for the honour you have done me," ere he suddenly collapsed, and resumed his seat! Never was astonishment more strangely depicted upon the human countenance than it was upon that of Jerrold at this singular fiasco on the part of his hopeful son. He was literally dumb-founded, but at length he exploded with a sort of cachinnatory splutter—not to call it laughter— and looking round the room, in doubt as to where he should fix his gaze, he murmured, "*Well!*" Amongst the guests

on that evening was Dr. Wright, Jerrold's medical attendant, and that gentleman had selected as his partner in a dance Miss Mary Jerrold, our host's youngest daughter. The Doctor being "more than common tall," and the young lady being rather short, but not of very minute proportions, their combined appearance produced a somewhat ludicrous effect as they waltzed round the *salon*, and Jerrold, suddenly catching a glimpse of them, exclaimed, "Hollo! there's a mile dancing with a mile-stone!"

An interesting period in the life of Douglas Jerrold was the fiftieth anniversary of his birthday, which he resolved to celebrate with all the honours due to such an occasion. The day was the 3rd January, 1853, and Jerrold received at his dinner-table, in the Circus Road, St. John's Wood, a large number of his most intimate friends, including the proprietors and contributors to *Punch*—Mr. Charles Knight (whom he held in very high esteem), Mr. Hepworth Dixon, Mr. E. H. Baily, R.A., the eminent sculptor, and a few others, including myself, who were better known to friendship than to fame. Jerrold was in remarkably good health and spirits, and treated the allusions that were made to the occasion of the meeting in a tone of hilarity which rendered the question as to "ages"

matter of jocular rather than sentimental import. The evening was indeed one of the merriest I ever passed in the society of Douglas Jerrold, and so gratified was Mr. Baily, who was the Nestor of the party—being, indeed, in his seventy-fifth year—that he said he should gladly commemorate the event by making a bust of Jerrold, and presenting a cast of it to every one present. The bust was executed in marble, and is now in the possession of the family, who not only regard it as one of the most poetically conceived works which modern sculpture has produced, but seldom speak of it without calling to mind the interesting occasion which gave rise to it. So admirable is it as a likeness, and so graceful as a composition, that I am constrained to say, in common with others similarly situated, that I was sadly disappointed that Mr. Baily was unable to carry out his promise to its full extent.

In the month of May, 1857, Jerrold was stricken with his mortal illness; and saddening indeed was the effect upon his club-mates and his dearest friends, as day by day they found their hopes for his recovery becoming fainter and fainter. Every conceivable attention was paid to him, both by the members of his household and by the physicians—Dr. Cleveland,

Dr. H. G. Wright, and Dr. Quain—to whom his case was entrusted; but he expired in the beginning of June. By a melancholy coincidence, I chanced to arrive at his chamber-door at the very moment that the family were leaving the room after seeing him breathe his last; and Mrs. Jerrold having begged me to enter, I was much impressed by the picture that presented itself. All had quitted the room with the exception of Mr. Copeland, the brother-in-law of Douglas Jerrold, then the proprietor of the Theatre Royal, and the Royal Amphitheatre, Liverpool. That gentleman was leaning over the body of his departed friend and relative, and looking at his countenance with the most profound attention while he struggled in vain to conceal the grief that oppressed him. For some minutes Mr. Copeland and I remained the sole watchers over the corpse; and when, after giving vent to the feelings which literally overpowered me, I at last contrived to tear myself from the house, I could not possibly dismiss the reflection from my mind that the place which Douglas Jerrold had so many years held in my memory and esteem was never likely to be supplied.

The funeral of my lamented friend took place at Norwood Cemetery, on a bright morning in

the month of June, and the spot chosen for his interment was in close proximity to the grave of his boy-friend and literary associate, Laman Blanchard. Those who were present on that mournful occasion—and they were indeed numerous —can never forget the extraordinary interest which attached to the event. Long before the time fixed for the arrival of the funeral *cortége*, the burial-ground was absolutely thronged with gentlemen celebrated in literature, the drama, and fine arts. Indeed, it would have been difficult to mention the name of any person well known to those three professions who was not there to take part in the generous tribute that was being paid to one who had, by the unaided force of his genius and will, successfully climbed

"The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar."

The coffin was of plain oak, and was borne upon an open car, on each side of which were the initials "D. J." In the mourning coaches which followed it were seated Mr. Blanchard Jerrold and Mr. Thomas Serle Jerrold (Douglas Jerrold's eldest and youngest sons), Mr. Copeland (his brother-in-law), Mr. Henry Mayhew (his son-in-law), and the three medical gentlemen who had attended the deceased in his last

illness. The pall-bearers were Mr. Charles Dickens, Mr. W. M. Thackeray, Mr. Charles Knight, Mr. Horace Mayhew, Mr. Mark Lemon, Mr. Monckton Milnes, M.P. (now Lord Houghton), and Mr. Bradbury (of the firm of Bradbury and Evans), all of whom wore on their arms crape rosettes embroidered with the initials "D. J." As the coffin was being conveyed to the chapel, some hundreds of gentlemen followed in procession, and amongst these should be mentioned the names of John Leech, Shirley Brooks, John Tenniel, Tom Taylor, Percival Leigh, Samuel Lucas (at one period reviewer of books in the *Times*), W. Bayle Bernard, John Baldwin Buckstone, T. Sydney Cooper, R.A., George Cruikshank, Peter Cunningham, Augustus Egg, R.A., John Forster, James Hannay, William Hazlitt, J. A. Heraud, Charles Kenney, E. Landells, Charles Landseer, R.A., Thomas and George Landseer, E. Lloyd (the proprietor of *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, which bore the name of Douglas Jerrold as editor for the last five years of his life), Daniel Maclise, R.A., Kenny Meadows, John Oxenford, Sir Joseph Paxton, Albert Smith, E. M. Ward, R.A., Benjamin Webster, Erasmus Wilson, Forbes Winslow, E. Moxon, &c. A glance at these names, which form but a very

small proportion of the vast assembly gathered together at the spot, will furnish a conspicuous proof of the various interests and pursuits represented on that sad morning; and it may be safely affirmed that few have been the funeral ceremonies where those who attended them were influenced by feelings of more unfeigned regret than were manifested at the obsequies of Douglas Jerrold.

The following letter, addressed to me by Mr. Henry Holl, formerly an excellent light comedian, and now a well-known merchant in the City, is so strongly confirmatory of all that has been said, here and elsewhere, regarding Douglas Jerrold's flashes of wit, that I need offer no excuse for introducing it:—

"To remember or to note down the wonderful things that our ever-lamented friend Jerrold said is a hopelessly-impossible task. No one could do it; for though I have heard showers of them, they came with such rapidity, and one good thing followed so immediately on the heels of another, that unless one could have written shorthand, it would have been impossible to put them on paper. Jerrold's stories, too, were so good, and so admirably told, I am afraid my repetitions of them would come off shorn of the effect. I have put down one or two that came across me, although forming a ten-thou-

sandth part of what I have heard. I think Dixon * has made a sort of collection, and some of his bright things might be got from other friends; but nothing can be collected to give a just notion of his wonderful powers. His wit came with such a sudden flash, and so immediately upon a sentence uttered by another, and even before it was completed, that as the laugh went round you were wonder-struck *as to how it could be done*, for his flash had so many rays! so many meanings in one hit, that I have often sat (if I may borrow a phrase of David Masson's)† 'stunned by it.'

"William Jerrold knows the list of his father's friends so well, that it would be useless in me to point them out. They all must have something, and 'many a little makes a mickle.'

"Oh that poor Jerrold had had a Boswell!"

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* William Hepworth Dixon, author of "New America," "Her Majesty's Tower," &c. A favourite club-mate of Douglas Jerrold, at "Our Club."

† The original editor of "Macmillan's Magazine," and a prominent member of "Our Club."

CHAPTER VII.

Introduction to Mr. Charles Dickens—Elton, the Tragedian—Wreck of the Steamer *Pegasus*—Public Subscription for the Benefit of Elton's Family—The Art Union of London—The Sanatorium, or Home in Sickness—Miss Kelly, the celebrated Actress—Mr. Harley, the Comedian, and the Duke of Leinster—"Every Man in his Humour"—Charles Dickens, John Forster, &c., in an Amateur Performance.

MY first introduction to Mr. Charles Dickens, whose name has already been alluded to in these pages, took place on an occasion which I shall always remember with gratification, as it presented this illustrious master of his art in a character which he has continued to fill with almost unexampled skill and energy, whenever a fitting opportunity has arisen—the character of a warm and energetic promoter of a benevolent object. In the summer of 1843 Edward William Elton, the tragedian (who will be remembered for his performance of many important parts during Mr. Macready's management at Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres), was drowned, through the wreck of the

Pegasus steam-ship on a voyage from Leith to London; and in order to bring the event and the man more vividly before the reader than I (who was a stranger to him) can pretend to do, I will here quote some remarks of Douglas Jerrold, which appeared in "The Illuminated Magazine," prefixed to two short poems by the deceased actor, called respectively "The Mulberry Tree," and "The Name."

"Poor Elton! He was one of the men whose walk through life is nearly always in the shade. Few and flickering were the beams upon his path! The accident that led to the closing of his life was only of the same sad colour as his life itself. He was to have embarked in a vessel bound direct for London. She had sailed only half an hour before, and he stepped aboard that death-ship the *Pegasus!* If, however, the worldly successes of Elton were not equal to his deserts, he had a refined taste, and a true love of literature—qualities that 'make a sunshine in a shady place,' diminishing the gloom of fortune. As an actor, Elton had not sufficient physical power to give force and dignity to his just conceptions. In his private character—and I write from a long knowledge of the dead—he was a man of warm affections and high principle, taking the buffets of life with a

resignation, a philosophy, that to the out-door world showed nothing of the fire-side wounds bleeding within."

The death of Mr. Elton being as premature as it was sudden, and his position, notwithstanding his acknowledged ability, never having been permanently assured, he had failed to make provision for his children, who were seven in number, and by the loss of their father had now been deprived of both parents. A committee was therefore formed, with Mr. Charles Dickens at the head, for the purpose of promoting a public subscription in aid of the orphan children, and the members of that committee included, as may well be supposed, many men of distinction in art, literature, and the drama. Amongst them were Mr. Laman Blanchard, Mr. John Pritt Harley (most agreeable of comic actors where the lighter forms of mirth were to be developed), Mr. John Forster (the biographer of Goldsmith and Walter Savage Landor, &c.), Mr. Wm. Bayle Bernard (one of the best of writers for the stage at a time when good dialogue was as much appreciated as sensation claptraps are now), Mr. T. J. Serle (Mr. Macready's secretary and acting manager at Drury Lane, and the author of "The Shadow on the Wall," "Master Clarke," and many other success-

ful dramas), Mr. Mark Lemon, Mr. Kenny Meadows, Mr. Daniel Maclise, R.A., Mr. R. R. McIan (effective personator of Scotch characters on the stage, and able delineator, on canvas, of wild mountain passes, with two or more figures engaged in mortal combat), Mr. Clarkson Stanfield, R.A., Mr. John Ogden (a very old friend and bosom companion of the deceased, and known in literary circles as a graphic and humorous writer), Mr. Perry, and many other members of the Mulberry Club, &c.

Mr. Charles Dickens was, as may be supposed, elected chairman by general acclamation, and under his practical and business-like direction the subjoined resolutions were prepared and agreed to at the first meeting (which took place at the Freemasons' Tavern, as was the case with all subsequent ones), the mighty author of "Pickwick" drafting them in his own handwriting, with a view to their being copied afterwards by whomsoever should chance to be employed as clerk or amanuensis:—

"Tuesday Evening, 25th July, 1843.

"1. That the late melancholy death of Mr. Elton renders it the duty of all the friends and admirers of that respected gentleman to befriend his seven fatherless and motherless children by every means in their power.

"2. That with this object in view, it is indispensable that a public benefit take place, without delay, at one of the national theatres. That the most eminent members of the theatrical and musical professions be solicited to perform at the same; and that a general subscription-list be immediately opened.

"3. That a member of the committee (to be chosen by the body) be requested to wait upon George E. Anson, Esq., treasurer to his Royal Highness Prince Albert, with the view of respectfully calling the attention of his Royal Highness to a design so worthy of his generous sympathy and support.

"4. That Mr. Perry be requested to act as honorary treasurer.

"5. That Mr. McIan be requested to act as honorary secretary.

"6. That Mr. Serle be requested to wait on Mr. Burgess, solicitor to the company of proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre, requesting the gratuitous use of that establishment for the purpose in view.

"7. That the best thanks of the committee be returned to B. Webster, Esq., of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, for his liberal and generous offer of his theatre; and that the secretary be desired to convey to Mr. Webster their grateful sense of his kindness.

"8. That, in the event of the benefit taking place at Drury Lane Theatre, Mr. Serle be requested to officiate as acting manager."

The committee had proceeded thus far in their labours when they discovered that the honorary secretary was not quite so ready with his pen as he was with his pencil, and that although the term "honorary" implied absence of all emolument, it must not be held to justify entire freedom from work. It was therefore agreed that another secretary should be employed, who, though also honorary, should understand that term in an active, not in a passive sense; and Mr. Mark Lemon, already conscious of my willingness to accept of such an office if called upon, and knowing that I was dining that evening in the immediate neighbourhood, kindly stepped out and conducted me to the committee-room. I was at once introduced to Mr. Dickens and the committee, and was installed as acting secretary, Mr. McIan's name as honorary secretary being still retained in the daily advertisements of the proceedings. From that moment a sense of responsibility weighed upon me which I had never before experienced; and I feared lest, in the presence of so much recognised ability, I should fail in the discharge of a duty I had so suddenly un-

dertaken. Mr. Dickens, however, treated me with such friendly consideration, and gave me all my instructions so clearly and succinctly, that I soon felt perfectly at ease by his side; and it was not unusual for me to write upwards of twenty letters in the course of an evening, showing how vigorously and determinedly the committee pursued their philanthropic mission.

It is quite unnecessary for me to weary the reader with details of the sayings and doings at the several meetings of the "Elton Committee;" but as I had never before seen Mr. Dickens under similar circumstances—or indeed under any circumstances at all—I may here take leave to observe that he displayed at that period the same remarkable tact and dominating power, without any undue assumption, which he has been known to manifest on many subsequent occasions, when called upon to discharge a duty requiring the exercise of judgment and decision. The committee continued to assemble, with exemplary punctuality and zeal, for many evenings, and the gratifying result of their deliberations was a subscription of about 2500*l.* towards the relief of the fatherless and motherless children of the late Mr. Elton, who, as it transpired at the time, was highly respected by his

friends upon two public grounds—beyond those which referred to his private and personal worth—first, that he was an actor of considerable ability and culture in the classic walks of his art; secondly, that, owing to a want of that natural physique which is inevitably required for the development of such characters as he undertook to personate, he could not succeed in achieving that distinction which his well-tutored mind would otherwise have won for him.

In less than twelve months after the business of the Elton committee was at an end, I was a candidate for the appointment of Secretary to the Art Union of London (Mr. George Godwin and Mr. Lewis Pocock being honorary secretaries), and I took the liberty of applying to Mr. Dickens for a testimonial. He complied with my request in a letter so generous and so cordial in all his expressions towards me, that I cannot but wish it concerned some one else rather than myself, in order that I might record it *verbatim*, to exemplify the noble impulses by which the writer could be actuated. The letter was read aloud by the gentlemen who were to decide upon the choice of the most eligible candidate, and I was afterwards favoured with a marked expression of regret from the council, that one so highly recommended had been beaten in

a competition which reflected so much honour upon himself.

At a subsequent period, Mr. Dickens's desire to confer a benefit upon me led to a result of a much more agreeable character, and the fact is now recorded for the purpose of showing the disinterested aid which literary giants are capable of lending to literary dwarfs. The institution previously mentioned, called "The Sanatorium, or Home in Sickness," was in want of a secretary, and Mr. Dickens, being a member of the committee of management, was anxious to recommend me as a fitting candidate to fill the office. He, therefore, caused a letter to be addressed to me by his brother Frederick, requesting me to call upon him, at his house in Devonshire Terrace, at my "earliest *in*convenience." I naturally thought at the time that the negative prefix "in" was the result of an ordinary slip of the pen, arising from the haste in which the letter was written; but when I subsequently became on terms of intimacy with Frederick Dickens, and could understand the irrepressible spirit of waggery which characterized him in a singular degree, I was forced to the conclusion (and, indeed, he did not deny it) that the introduction of the obtrusive syllable was really

intentional. However, be that as it may, I lost no time in deciding the precise moment at which my "earliest convenience" should arrive, and was at Mr. Dickens's house as soon after breakfast on the following morning as appeared to me reasonable and proper. He then informed me of his desire to secure me the vacant secretaryship, and described the institution as a private hospital where patients were admitted upon payment of stipulated charges.

I accepted the proffered kindness with the heartiest thanks; and in a very brief space of time the appointment was conferred upon me, Mr. Dickens having, as I learnt, promoted my cause with a spontaneous fervour which those who know him will fully appreciate; and, even at this distant date, I take the first public opportunity I have had of tendering my grateful acknowledgments to him. "Had you been his own brother," said the resident physician, Dr. Hitchman, to me, after I had become installed in the office, "he could not have spoken for you more enthusiastically than he did; and you are indebted to him for the grant of a larger emolument than was originally intended." The Sanatorium was then in its infancy, and its funds being therefore limited, the committee were of course

bound to be as economical as possible, and Dr. Hitchman readily conceded that my remuneration, though small, was liberal under the circumstances. Unfortunately for all concerned, but more especially for that section of the community whose interests it was expressly designed to serve, the institution did not receive that encouragement to which it was entitled; and after constantly renewed efforts on the part of the committee to establish it on a permanent basis, it gradually sunk into oblivion.

Notwithstanding the lapse of years since that period, I remember with infinite pleasure the kindness and courtesy I experienced from Dr. Hitchman and his lady, Mrs. Hitchman, the former frequently coming into my room (for the secretary's duty was performed within the building), and inviting me to partake of his hospitality; and I am the more gratified to recall the name of the worthy doctor, because it was during my intercourse with him, that he became a contributor to the "Illuminated Magazine;" and it was he who owned the authorship of the interesting and instructive article referred to by Douglas Jerrold in his letter, saying "'Dwellings of the Poor' goes in this month," &c. After the closing of the Sanatorium, I saw nothing more of Dr. and Mrs. Hitchman; and

should these few sentences chance to fall under their notice, I trust they may not be disinclined to renew an acquaintance, which to me was a source of infinite pleasure and satisfaction.

Conspicuous among the supporters of the institution was Dr. Southwood Smith, whose well-known work, "The Philosophy of Health," together with his medical experience and distinguished philanthropy, proved him to be an able adviser on such matters as came under the control of the committee of management; and equally prominent in position, though with qualifications of a different character, was Mr. Thomas Chapman, an eminent merchant, whose countenance was always lighted up by a smile of benevolence, and who, of late years, has infused that Christian charity which at all times prompted his actions at the Sanatorium, into the important duties attendant upon the direction of the National Lifeboat Institution.

Duties similar to those which Mr. Dickens had discharged as chairman of the "Elton Committee," again devolved upon him in the year 1853, when a committee was formed for the purpose of arranging an entertainment for the benefit of Miss Kelly, the celebrated actress, who was no longer prominently

before the public, and who stood in need of pecuniary assistance by reason of losses she had sustained through the expenses of her little theatre in Dean Street, Soho. The meetings of this committee were held at the office of the "Guild of Literature and Art," Lancaster Place, Strand; Mr. Dickens was the chairman, and the Duke of Leinster, Mr. Walter Arnold (the proprietor of the Lyceum Theatre), and Mr. Harley, the comedian, were among the most active members, the last-mentioned being also honorary secretary, while the duties of working, but still honorary, secretary were entrusted to me. There is not much to recall in reference to this undertaking, except that it tended to show how foremost Mr. Charles Dickens has always been to employ his well-known energy and zeal for the advancement of any object which might seem to him deserving of his aid, while at the same time it afforded, as will be seen in the sequel, an illustration of the proverbial fickleness and caprice of the gentler sex. Various meetings were held, and a correspondence was commenced with the managers of certain London theatres requesting their co-operation in the movement; while many letters, such as the following, were written by Mr. Dickens at his own

house, when it might be supposed that his literary avocations would divert his thoughts from the more public duties which the preliminaries for the benefit of Miss Kelly had entailed upon him.

"My dear Sir,—Will you write (as in the other cases) to Wright [of the Adelphi Theatre], asking him to act for Miss Kelly's benefit? Observe—*If* you have heard from Mr. Arnold that Charles Mathews will not undertake to get up Jenkins in 'Gretna Green,' ask Wright if he will do it. If you have not heard from Arnold, don't tell Wright yet, positively, what we want him to do; but send him the letter.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. D."

The theatre at which the performances were to take place was not yet finally decided upon, though the advertisements announced that the St. James's was the chosen establishment; but the general arrangements were fast approaching completion, and there was every prospect of the benefit being profitable to the lady whom it was intended to serve, and creditable to those who had undertaken the responsibility of promoting it. That Miss Kelly fully appreciated the disinterested exertions of her friends, and was herself disposed to enter practically into the

necessary arrangements, will be seen from the subjoined letter :—

Miss Kelly presents her compliments to Mr. Hodder, and requests, at his leisure and convenience, a little plan of the St. James's Theatre, and a particular account of how many it will hold on the various seats, with a few bills and tickets, for which she will send as soon as they are ready.

"Moscow Road, Bayswater,
May 18."

At length, however, much to the regret and disappointment of the committee, Miss Kelly ceased to display that readiness to co-operate with them which they naturally had a right to expect; and letters were received from her, pointing out technical objections to certain details in the proceedings, and suggesting alterations, which, if carried into effect, would lead to insurmountable difficulties. In this state of things it was agreed that there was no alternative but to withdraw from the undertaking—indeed, Miss Kelly had virtually expressed a wish that such should be the case—rather than enter into further responsibilities which seemed likely to compromise the committee, and to offer an affront to many of the dramatic artists whose friendly services had been secured.

Accordingly the following announcement was published within a month of the date given in Miss Kelly's letter above transcribed:—

"June 13, 1853.

"The committee for conducting Miss Kelly's benefit, intended to be given at the St. James's Theatre on Thursday next, the 16th inst., beg to announce to the ladies and gentlemen who have kindly proffered their services on the occasion, that the performances (which will probably take place at Drury Lane Theatre) are postponed for the present; but due notice will be given to the parties whose attendance may be hereafter required.

"Signed, on behalf of the Committee,

"J. P. Harley,

Honorary Secretary."

It is almost superfluous to state that "due notice" was never afterwards given; and the benefit to Miss Kelly was numbered amongst the great events which *might* have been but for contending influences, such as can only be ascribed to the decrees of fate. The meetings of the committee, however, were not entirely without fruit; for it generally happened that at the close of the proceedings some two or three of its members would remain behind for a brief gossip on theatrical matters. At the last gathering which took place—on

the occasion when Mr. Harley put his signature to the above document—I was much amused by a dialogue between that esteemed actor and the Duke of Leinster, each appearing to consider it an honour to meet the other on "level ground." The Duke, I thought, was particularly affable and communicative, and he led the conversation into subjects pertaining to his every-day life and habits. Upon the question as to the various means of promoting health he enlarged with much earnestness; and referred particularly to the efficacy of the sponge-bath, which, he said, he vigorously employed every morning. Mr. Harley's face brightened when he told the Duke that he had long adopted the same wholesome habit; but he seemed still more gratified upon learning that his grace was a very abstemious man; for it is well known that Harley's moderate use of strong fluids was one of the approved jokes with which the theatrical profession was at that time familiar. "Water outwardly and water inwardly," he said on this occasion, "I find to be beneficial to me, and I try to do justice to it." Upon this the Duke remarked that he had a plentiful supply of good wine in his cellar, but that he drank very little of it; that in times past he could take a large share, but that he gave up the habit because an

uncle of his expressed his horror and amazement at seeing him, during some boating expedition in his youth, drink a quart of beer at a draught. So strongly was he impressed, he went on to observe, by the forcible language in which his uncle uttered his indignant protest against the vice of drinking, that he had never taken to it since. And in this way was the conversation between the Duke and the actor carried on for some few minutes, while I, who was responsible for the closing of the room, patiently awaited their departure. I have not pretended to give more than a mere jotting of the colloquy that took place between the patrician and the player; but I have thought the occurrence worthy of mention, because it exhibited an agreeable interchange of opinions and sentiments between two men of opposite grades in life, and showed that he, who had often personated the "Mock Duke," was perfectly at home in the presence of a real one.

As I have been speaking of Mr. Charles Dickens in connexion with theatrical matters, this may be a fitting opportunity for the introduction of a play-bill in which his name prominently appears. The occasion was that of an amateur performance at the St. James's Theatre, and as the event must be now

well nigh forgotten, a list of the *dramatis personæ* will not, I think, be uninteresting:—

Strictly Private.

AMATEUR PERFORMANCE

AT THE

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE

(Which Mr. Mitchell has handsomely placed at the disposal of the Committee for the occasion, free of expense),

On Saturday Evening, November 15, 1845.

When will be performed

BEN JONSON'S COMEDY OF

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.

CHARACTERS.

Knowell	Mr. Henry Mayhew.
Edward Knowell	Mr. Frederick Dickens.
Brainworm	Mr. Mark Lemon.
George Downright	Mr. Dudley Costello.
Wellbred	Mr. George Cattermole.
Kitely	Mr. John Forster.
Captain Bobadil	Mr. Charles Dickens.
Master Stephen	Mr. Douglas Jerrold.
Master Matthew	Mr. John Leech.
Thomas Cash	Mr. Augustus Dickens.
Oliver Cob	Mr. Percival Leigh.
Justice Clement	Mr. Frank Stone.
Roger Formal	Mr. Evans.
William	Mr. Eaton.
James	Mr. W. Blanchard Jerrold.
Dame Kitely	Miss Fortescue.
Mistress Bridget	Miss Hinton.
Tib	Miss Bew.

To conclude with a Farce, in one Act, called

A GOOD NIGHT'S REST;

OR,

TWO O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

CHARACTERS.

Mr. Snobbington . . . . . Mr. CHARLES DICKENS.
The Stranger . . . . . Mr. MARK LEMON.

Previous to the Comedy, the Overture to "William Tell." Previous to the Farce, the Overture to "La Gazza Ladra."

His Royal Highness Prince Albert has been pleased to express his intention to honour the performance with his presence. The tickets of admission are presentable at the theatre from a quarter before six o'clock. The performance will commence at seven precisely, by which time it is requested that the whole of the company will be seated.

EVENING DRESS.

CHAPTER VIII.

Leigh Hunt in Private Life—The late Thomas Hood—A Scheming Autograph-seeker — Leigh Hunt's *London Journal* — Correspondence with Leigh Hunt — James Sheridan Knowles — Douglas Jerrold and Sheridan Knowles — Anecdotes of the latter—First Visit to a Theatre—Macready as Sardanapalus—The great Tragedian at Home.

MY connexion with the Sanatorium brought me in contact, as mentioned above, with a gentleman well known in the City for his urbanity and mercantile intelligence, and for his liberal doings in matters of a charitable nature, such as those which came under his control as a member of the committee of management. Holding a responsible office in his establishment was an ambitious gentleman who had published a volume of poems, and who had a great desire to possess autograph-letters of eminent men. This latter fact I allude to because I had reason to believe it was the cause of his introducing me to an eminent writer, whose works I had read with an appreciation beyond that which is ordinarily commanded by contemporary

authors, and whom I could not have supposed I should ever have the privilege of meeting in friendly intercourse. In my capacity of secretary to the Sanatorium, I had been called upon to address a letter to the late Thomas Hood, requesting him to act as a steward on the occasion of a public dinner then about to take place in aid of the funds of that institution, and I immediately received, in answer to my application, a letter which the great humorist well knew would be read aloud to the company assembled at the banquet, and in which, therefore, he had contrived to embody those characteristics of drollery and pathos so peculiarly belonging to him. The effect of the letter was that the writer regretted that, "although a married man, and well tended," and receiving those domestic comforts which should help to enable him to bear the buffets of fortune, he could not, on account of impaired health, accept the honour sought to be conferred upon him. The dinner took place, and the letter was read out as Mr. Hood anticipated. Among the guests was the autograph-seeking gentleman before alluded to; and in the course of the evening he came to me to express the unbounded interest he felt in the letter as a valuable illustration of Hood's peculiar humour. I fully appreciated the incontestible remark,

and *kept* the letter—for which, by the way, I was afterwards offered a high price in specie, but disdained to accept it, feeling assured that I possessed a treasure which must be regarded as a literary curiosity of more than ordinary interest.

In the course of a week or two from the date of the festive gathering, I received a pressing invitation from the poetaster in question, to dine with him at his house at Peckham, "to meet Leigh Hunt and his daughters," and begging me to take with me the letter of Thomas Hood, as Mrs. —— (his wife) was most anxious to see it. Here was an honour so entirely unsought and unexpected, that I could only consider it in the light of "greatness thrust upon me;" and alarmed though I was at the idea of meeting the intimate associate of two such world-renowned men as Byron and Shelley, and who had suffered imprisonment for the bold expression of his opinions as a journalist, I very naturally availed myself of the opportunity. The evening arrived, and the party consisted, besides the host and hostess, of Mr. Leigh Hunt and his two daughters, Julia and Jacintha (I trust I am betrayed into no error as to the names of the fair ladies), Mr. Augustus Dickens, youngest brother of Mr. Charles Dickens, and who then held a

clerkship in the same merchant's office as the host, and myself. Mr. Hunt sat opposite to me, and it must be confessed that my respect for the viands before me was much weakened by the reflection that I was in presence of a poet, whose "Story of Rimini" had attracted the notice and gained the commendation of Lord Byron, and who had often been alluded to by Shelley in his prose writings as among his choicest companions.

To be seated at the same table with Leigh Hunt was, I thought, like seeing Byron and Shelley by a reflected light; and I could not but watch, with a curiosity amounting almost to awe, every movement of his face, and every word that fell from his lips. True, I soon discovered that, after all, he was but mortal man, and that, despite the history of his past career, he talked and acted as a being of ordinary instincts rather than as one who might be supposed to have wings to fly with. Still I was constantly reminded of the indisputable fact that Leigh Hunt was "somebody," and that I was assuredly complimented in being brought into such close companionship with him.

I hardly dare venture to describe his personal appearance, further than to say he *looked* the man of

that refined intellectual power which had given him his place in the literature of his time; that his complexion seemed strangely to harmonize with his hair (for he wore no whiskers, and moustaches at that period had not found their way to this country), in one uniform tint of iron grey; and that his shirt-collar ascended from his neck in a *négligé* manner, which might be considered slovenly, but which was picturesquely effective in its loose luxuriance. There was, moreover, a sort of valetudinarian air about him, and he appeared extremely particular as to what he ate and drank, preferring, he said, the mildest form of nutriment, such as he was accustomed to at home—"just the wing of a chicken," and "only a moderate quantity of sherry and water," being especially demanded.

Dinner over, the company were ushered into the drawing-room, which communicated with the *salle-à-manger*, and there the host and hostess very wisely suggested "a little music." Accordingly, the Misses Hunt most kindly indulged the company with a specimen of their taste and skill in pianoforte-playing; and at length our host prevailed upon his distinguished visitor himself to "favour us with a tune" —a knowledge of music being known to be one

of Mr. Hunt's accomplishments. With this request he most readily complied, and good-humouredly observed, "I will give you a favourite *barcarolle* which I was in the habit of playing to Birron and Shelley in Italy" (he pronounced the first name as if it were spelt as I have written it—with two "rr's" and the "i" short).

He executed the task with a spirit and delicacy which could hardly have been expected from an amateur who had passed the greater part of his days in the cultivation of literature—"walled in by books," to use his own phrase; but if he had caused the instrument to squeak or to roar, instead of making it "discourse most eloquent music," I think I should gladly have lent my aid to secure an *encore*. Indeed, the performance suggested a combination of three great names, whose metrical sounds had long rung in the ears of admiring Englishmen; and I could not help thinking how greatly many of Mr. Hunt's compeers must have envied him the power and opportunity of entertaining two such renowned geniuses as Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

In the course of the evening our host took pains to remind me of his wife's high appreciation of the auto-

graphic letters of eminent men, and he assured me that she would be "so much obliged to me" if I would *lend* her, for a few days, the interesting epistle I had in my possession from Tom Hood. Full of gratitude for the honour I had received at his hands, I immediately consented; and — as may well be imagined—I never saw the letter afterwards. Thus was I made to sacrifice a treasure which had come to me from Tom Hood for the pleasure and privilege of an introduction to Leigh Hunt; and it is in no revengeful spirit that I mention the climax to the story, when I state that the master of the feast was afterwards dismissed from the office he held in the City for the trifling error of paying more regard to his own pocket than to the interests of his employers.

Mr. Hunt had engaged a fly for the evening (in those days cabs had not asserted their all-prevailing sway in the streets of the metropolis); and as he lived at Kensington, and I dwelt on the road thither, he very graciously offered me a seat—an act of courtesy on his part which I, of course, cheerfully accepted; so that I now found myself one of four in the same carriage with a world-renowned character whom I had previously been proud to encounter in the same room.

In the course of a most agreeable conversation (during which I particularly observed that Mr. Hunt never strove to assert the superiority which he possessed), I could not resist the opportunity of telling him that, like himself, I had been educated at Christ's Hospital; whereupon he playfully observed that he was there *a little* before my time,* and that Coleridge and Charles Lamb were somewhat before *his* time. Here again I was rendered deeply sensible of the good fortune which had befallen me; for I had not only been in close companionship with the friend of Byron and Shelley, but was now riding from one extreme of London to another with one who had sat under the same masters as Coleridge and Charles Lamb. Byron and Shelley, Coleridge and Lamb! Four bright and penetrating examples of the literary character of this century—so potent in their moral and intellectual influence, that it is difficult to avoid the impression that, however unsuccessfully we may draw our conclusions respecting their mental or physical *calibre*, one seems to have been brought, as it were, into familiar communion with them, in having enjoyed the society of their

* Leigh Hunt was at that time sixty years of age, as, in fact, he told me during our ride; and (not to be too particular) I was less than a quarter of a century younger than I am now.

accomplished friend, Leigh Hunt. He most kindly invited me to his "quiet suburban abode;" but alas! I let the happy chance slip by me!

Not long after the memorable little dinner at Peckham, a weekly periodical was started, under the experienced editorship of Mr. Hunt, and called *Leigh Hunt's London Journal.* Thinking that a favourable chance was here afforded me of coming in contact with Mr. Hunt under more practical circumstances than I had yet done, I forwarded to him a contribution to the journal, and received a gratifying note in return, accepting it. Unfortunately, however, the periodical did not prove a permanent success; and when the final number made its appearance, the article in question had not been permitted to see the light. Many good-natured friends stated at the time that it was in consequence of its being known to the inquiring readers that they were threatened with a contribution of mine that the publication came to an untimely end! Without stopping to inquire into the truth or cynicism of this allegation, it is melancholy to relate that the MS. has been lost to a disappointed posterity. Hoping to redeem it, I wrote a respectful letter to Mr. Hunt, and in order that he might extend

to me a little more indulgence than is generally shown by editors to casual contributors, I reminded him of the flattering circumstances under which I had met him some time previously, and of the friendly feeling he had then displayed towards me. In answer to my communication I received the following letter from his son, Vincent Leigh Hunt, dated—

"April 16, 1851.

"Dear Sir,—I hold the pen for my father, whose state of health obliges him, at present, to write as little as possible.

"The address of Mr. Stores Smith, the projector and proprietor of the late journal, is No. 1, Edith Villas, North End, Fulham. With regard to the MS. it is believed to be at Messrs. Stewart and Murray's, printers (of the Journal), Green Arbour Court, Old Bailey, but if you do not find it there, and will let my father know as much, he will cause further search to be made.

"My father, who has a very agreeable recollection of you, is duly sensible of your kind expressions."

I applied to the printers as directed, but with no satisfactory result; and it was not very probable that I should ever trouble Mr. Hunt to "cause further search to be made." As to the "journal," its existence was not prolonged beyond six months—

sufficient time to bring into life the contents of one volume.

It is, of course, beyond my province to express any opinion in regard to Leigh Hunt's valuable contributions to the literature of his time. Full justice has been rendered him in this respect by Mr. Edmund Ollier in an interesting memoir of the poet and essayist. It will be sufficient for me to confine myself in this, as in most other cases, to the wholesome practice of "speaking of a man as we find him;" and I certainly found in Leigh Hunt a man who appeared the very opposite of one who could be capable of disparaging either a living prince or a dead poet. The monument which has recently been erected to his memory, by subscription, may at least be taken as a proof that he lived to be regarded as a gentle-hearted, kindly-disposed man; and that, notwithstanding the errors into which he was betrayed in his earlier years, he won the respect and goodwill of those who knew him best, and whose opinion he would wish to be recorded on his tomb.

It will not, I think, be out of place here to mention that I once met James Sheridan Knowles* (the

* The production of Leigh Hunt's play of "The Legend of Florence"

author of a play which, if he had written no other, would have made his name immortal in the annals of dramatic literature—"Virginius") under circumstances of singular interest. I had entered the coffee-room of a tavern in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, where a large number of actors and others connected with the theatrical profession were, as usual, assembled; and I found that the company, instead of indulging in that freedom of speech, and that audible interchange of opinion which was their wont, seemed to be under some kind of restraint; for those who did venture to say anything, spoke

> "In a bondman's key,
> With bated breath, and whispering humbleness."

This extraordinary reticence surprised me greatly; and on looking round the room, in some perplexity, I perceived Sheridan Knowles (who was then in the

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succeeded that of Knowles's "John of Procida, or the Bridals of Messina," at Covent Garden Theatre, in the year 1840. In speaking of the former, Charles Knight says, with much truth, "The whole play is full of grace and tenderness—the work of a true artist." The principal character in both these pieces was represented by an Irish gentleman named Moore; and notwithstanding the unmistakeable indications he gave in his accent of the country he came from, he proved himself an artist of decided power and attainments. It has often been a matter of surprise, therefore, that his connexion with the London stage seemed to close at the period referred to.

zenith of his fame) seated in a far corner, taking no part in any conversation, and apparently not quite at his ease. "There's Sheridan Knowles!" whispered more than one gentleman of the party, as I advanced to find a seat for myself; and, as I immediately perceived, it was the fact of the great dramatic author being present which had exercised a species of awe over an assembly of players! In the course of a few minutes he rose to take his departure; and I was much interested in observing that every man in the room rose in obeisance to him. This was a tribute to genius which made a deep impression upon me at the time, and I have often thought since that it did much honour to those who, in offering it, played a part so worthy of the theatrical profession.

Sheridan Knowles was singularly remarkable, as is well known, for an ingenuous simplicity of speech, together with an absence of mind, which it was difficult to conceive in a man of such eminence; and many anecdotes are told of him which prove the correctness of this statement. As I have never seen any of these in print, though they may possibly have appeared, I shall offer no excuse for introducing in this place a few instances, which were communicated to me by the persons to whom they relate.

Jerrold once asked Knowles to explain the meaning of a particular incident in the plot of "The Hunchback," which had always appeared to him to involve an improbability unworthy of so excellent a production. "My dear boy!" said Knowles, "upon my word I can't tell you. Plots write themselves." The same fellow-dramatist, having on another occasion made some observation to Knowles on a scene in Shakespeare which had much impressed him, was anxious to test his friend's opinion upon the subject (thinking, of course, that he would prove himself a great authority in reference to such a question); but the moment Jerrold pronounced the name "Shakespeare," Knowles exclaimed, "'Pon my honour, I never read Shakespeare. I leave him for my old age!"

During an engagement at the Haymarket Theatre, Knowles having made preparations for a trip into the country, went to the dressing-room of the manager, Mr. Webster, and said, in his usual emphatic manner, "I'm going out of town to-morrow. Can I take any letters or parcels for you?"—"Well, my dear Knowles," replied Webster, "I'm much obliged to you, but where are you going?" "Upon my faith," said the ingenuous Irishman, "I really don't know, for I haven't made up my mind."

When a version of "Frankenstein" was being performed nightly at two metropolitan theatres, the hero being represented at the one by O. Smith, and at the other by T. P. Cooke—Knowles, on meeting the former one day in the street, stopped him, and cried, "Faith! I met your namesake yesterday—Mr. T. P. Cooke!"

The names of Mark Lemon and Leman Rede used to puzzle him severely; and as both were, at the period I speak of, frequently before the public as writers for the stage, Knowles could never bring himself to understand which of the two was the subject of congratulation when a dramatic success had been achieved by either of them. At length he met Leman Rede and Mark Lemon walking arm-in-arm. "Ah!" said Knowles, the moment he was close enough to accost them, "now I'm bothered entirely! Which of you is the other?"

Of Knowles's ability as an actor I will not attempt to express an opinion, further than to say it was very far below his powers as an author; and I will venture to relate a trifling incident, which I witnessed, in order to show that he could not be relied upon as a master of all the resources and conventionalities of the stage. He was playing the

Duke of Buckingham, in "King Henry VIII.," at Covent Garden Theatre, and in one of the early scenes it was his task to deliver several important speeches, all requiring the most careful and vigorous declamation, and leaving very small chance for an adroit escape in the event of the memory proving treacherous. In these he was evidently somewhat at a loss, and indeed gave no little confirmation of his own statement that he had "never read Shakespeare." At length he came to a passage which brought him to a complete stand-still, and instead of looking to the prompter for assistance, or getting out of the difficulty by some dexterous *ruse*, as a more "knowing" artist would have done, he remained in front of the footlights, and thumped his forehead several times with his hand; but the words would not come! The gesture was one which is, of course, well understood in private life, but which could not be otherwise than ludicrous when seen upon the stage, as in the instance now recorded. There was an unavoidable titter amongst the audience, but respect for the author and sympathy with the actor prevented it from rising into absolute laughter.

In drawing attention to events which have been more or less connected with the profession of "the

stage," I might recount many interesting anecdotes which have floated on the surface of literary society during my personal experience; but I prefer leaving the task to those historians with whose province it is more immediately associated. I have, however, a few reminiscences of the stage—*before* the curtain—which I am tempted to introduce in these pages, for the simple reason that they manifestly come within the general scope of my design.

The first time I went to the theatre was to Drury Lane, where I saw Lord Byron's tragedy of "Sardanapalus"—Macready personating the Assyrian King, and Miss Ellen Tree, Myrrha—and the opera of "Masaniello"—Braham representing the hero, and Miss Fanny Healy the dumb girl of Portici. My friend and cicerone on the occasion was Mr. Otho Thwaites, (pretty name for a Frenchman to pronounce!) at that time one of the proprietors of the *Morning Herald* (in connexion with which journal I had just commenced my acquaintance with newspaper work), and nobody but that gentleman knew at that moment, or has ever cared to know since, the delight I experienced throughout the performances. Not that I was at all alive to the fact that the entertainment was of so exceptionally attractive a character as I after-

wards found it to have been, nor had I indeed ever heard of the names of Macready, Ellen Tree, or John Braham; but the effect upon me was one of such unalloyed pleasure that I was positively distressed to an indescribable degree when the curtain fell upon the final scene of the tragedy; and on my companion asking me whether I would leave the theatre then, or wait for the succeeding performance, I felt I could annihilate him on the spot for his cruelty. But even our choicest delights must have an end, and when the opera, with its fascinating music and its picturesque costumes, was brought to a close, and I saw the unsympathizing servants covering the front of the boxes with that odious brown cloth, I thought I was being expelled from a place where all the joys of the world were concentrated. From that time forth I strove hard to see Macready off the stage, for it was he who had made the deepest impression upon my unsophisticated mind; and often did I wait at the stage-door, in the hope that I might enjoy a glimpse of him as he took his departure. But my desire was never gratified, and from that day to this I have unavoidably indulged the belief that great actors do not emerge from the theatres by the same door that the smaller ones do. Otherwise, how is it that one can always de-

light the eyes by a sight of the gentlemen who carry banners, or rush on to the stage, with a hop, skip, and a jump, to announce that "the Duke has just arrived," but can never be fortunate enough to behold the Duke himself? Could any playgoer ever realize the possibility of a Kean or a Kemble making an *exit* from the theatre without any stronger marks of individuality upon him than might be seen in a "heavy father" or a "stage villain?" And yet, from our very ignorance, we are compelled to arrive at all sorts of monstrous conclusions!

Not having achieved the distinction I sought of seeing Macready "in his habit as he lived," I was content to listen with rapt attention to the stories which others related concerning him; and I was excited almost to incredulity when Douglas Jerrold told me that he was once a guest at the great tragedian's own house in the country, and had passed a night in the bedroom adjoining that in which reposed the man whom he had many a time heard exclaiming that he "murdered sleep," and that he should "sleep no more!" Jerrold, in mentioning the circumstance, spoke in the warmest terms of Macready's hospitality, and adduced many instances of his kind thoughtfulness and friendly solicitude for the comfort and con-

venience of his guest. As the time arrived for retiring to rest, Macready

> " was his grim chamberlain
> That lighted him to bed ;"

and he was most considerate in the numerous questions he put, as to whether Jerrold, in his defective preparations for sleeping from home, had left any " wants" that he might supply. The friendly " Good night" was exchanged several times between guest and host, and at length Jerrold thought there was no chance of his seeing anything more of his hospitable friend until the morning. He had not, however, completed his " disrobing," before there came a sharp tap at the door, when Macready's face, full of earnest expression, again appeared before him, and his deep-toned voice sounded the words—" Jerrold, have you got a tooth-brush ?" This brief and common-place interrogatory was uttered with such emphasis and with such evident anxiety as to the result, that the effect upon Jerrold was quite as startling as it might be supposed to be if the words had reference to some stage conspiracy in which the actor and his guest were about to engage. Jerrold often said, laughingly, that in all his experience of Macready he had never seen him *make a better point.*

CHAPTER IX.

A Plea for an Invocation — A University Student — Performance of "Hamlet" by Amateurs—Riot in the Theatre—Tragedy Burlesqued—The Rebellious Audience addressed from a Private Box—A Hit more Palpable than Usual—A College Letter from Hamlet—The Destiny of the Performers and Fate of the "Rebels."

IN the hope that it may be permitted to one who treats of biographical recollections to indulge the same licence which, time out of mind, has been assumed by our most attractive novelists, I shall now beg the reader's attention to an event which occurred long antecedent to the dates referred to in the preceding pages. In doing this I ought to be enabled to call to my mind those friendly muses whom Henry Fielding most successfully invoked when he sat down to describe the battle royal in the churchyard, so graphically pictured in "Tom Jones;" for without such inspiration I cannot hope to convey an adequate idea of the most remarkable dramatic performance with which the world is *not* familiar, and in

which I myself played an all-important part. Many memorable failures and many renowned successes have been experienced by amateurs who have desired to fret their hour upon the stage; but—ye powers that exercise your sway over the histrionic art! never was there so grand a tribute paid to you as was offered at your shrine on an imperishable evening in the month of January, 1839!

A party of congenial spirits had resolved themselves into a friendly club in the classic neighbourhood of Covent Garden; and one of its members, a gentleman named Anderson, who had just completed his career at one of the Universities, was then preparing his way for an appointment in India by the temporary cultivation of a taste for the stage. Having thoroughly imbued himself with the spirit of the great actors of that time, he determined to try his dramatic strength in "Hamlet;" and as his figure, education, and ability amply justified the belief that he contemplated a task which he was not unqualified to fulfil, his friends gladly encouraged the idea, and promised to support him on the stage to the best of their power; knowing at the same time that, as far as they were individually concerned, there was little chance of the tragedy being represented otherwise

than as a very broad comedy. The characters were cast; and an arrangement was made, through the agency of the late Mr. Thomas Lucombe, afterwards the father-in-law of Mr. Sims Reeves (and who, having many times disported himself upon the stage, could not be properly classed amongst the amateurs), for the performance to take place at the best known private theatre of the time. The young collegian was to be supported in his arduous undertaking by—in play-bill language—"the following powerful cast." To Mr. Hassell, a well-known landscape-painter, was assigned the part of the King; Mr. Pym, the proprietor of the theatre, was to play Polonius; myself, Horatio; Mr. Hoffman (a solicitor), Laertes, Mr. Roche (then a law-student, and now one of the registrars in the Court of Bankruptcy), Rosencrantz; Mr. Hire, Guildenstern; Mr. Henry Baylis, Osric; Mr. Bayne (a solicitor in the bud), Marcellus; and Mr. T. Lucombe, the First Gravedigger; while the characters of the Players, and those of the Queen of Denmark and Ophelia, were to be represented by "professionals." The part of the Ghost was to be undertaken by Mr. Henry Mayhew. The audience was not to be a "paying" audience, but was to consist exclusively of the friends of the ambitious actors; and the re-

hearsals were to take place in a private room of the tavern where the club held its daily gatherings. This latter arrangement, considering that, with one or two exceptions, not a member of the company had ever ventured upon the stage before, was not very well calculated to insure the most perfect representation of "Hamlet" that was ever witnessed; and when the long looked-for evening arrived, it was too evident that our friends, foreseeing admirable scope for laughter in the performance of the tragedy, were precisely of that order of "friends" from whom we have always been taught to cry, "Save us!" In fact, they had organized a complete band of scoffers, determined to laugh at everything and everybody, unless perhaps at the representation of the Prince of Denmark himself, whose acting it was known would be far too good to excite derision.

In the very centre of the front boxes sat the ringleaders of this merciless clique, and long before the curtain rose their voices could be heard sending forth all kinds of sounds which were by no means suggestive of encouragement to the actors. Meanwhile the operation of dressing and "colouring" was proceeded with behind the curtain, and when we saw the extraordinary exhibition which a friend of the Ghost had

made of his "buried majesty" in the process of painting him, we could well anticipate the shouts of laughter which would soon greet our ears. There was, of course, an amusing scramble for the costumes, and some of the *dramatis personæ* were by no means particular as to the accommodation afforded to their rival tragedians, provided they found dresses to fit themselves with a tolerable approach to correctness. As to my unfortunate self, there was only one pair of "tights" which were small enough for my attenuated shanks, and these were ruthlessly appropriated by Marcellus (who, being a very inferior personage to Horatio, ought to have known better), so that when my toilet was complete, the height of absurdity had been successfully attained. My "tights" hung in loose folds about my legs, and no two articles of my general costume were in the least degree in harmony with each other; so that, in point of fact, had I been equipped for a burlesque the result could not have been more effective. The moment I made my appearance with Marcellus (the monster who had squeezed his plump legs into the nether integuments which common humanity would have allotted to me!) in the first scene, there was an explosive shout from the villains in the front boxes, who called out, at the top of their

voices, "Here's George! Bravo, George! Hurrah, George!"

"Friends to this ground," exclaims Horatio, in answer to the soldier on guard, when he inquires "Who's there?"

"Bravo, George! Your tights are not too large, but your legs are too small!" This was certainly a pretty greeting for the important personage who was to be the "friend to Hamlet" for the next three or four hours!

What little confidence I may have had in the outset was now completely destroyed, and I saw there was no possible chance of my being treated with that respect which was due to my exalted position. But my most severe trial had yet to come, and that in the same scene; for therein Horatio has to confront the Ghost on the first appearance of that sepulchral and rhetorical gentleman, and when the former cries out—

"I'll cross it though it blast me!"

he is expected to draw his sword and steal furtively round the offending spirit as if he intended to "draw his blood" the moment he thinks he can do it on the sly. Now, I had become perfectly satisfied at our rehearsals—we had really only *one*, and that most

unsatisfactory, upon the stage—that this was an extremely difficult task for a novice to perform without rendering himself ridiculous; and my difficulty was not a little increased when I heard the loud guffaws of my rebellious friends in the boxes, as, with bended knee and sword outstretched, I "crossed" the Ghost, and passed slowly from one side of the stage to the other in that most desperate operation. In the meantime poor Hamlet was preparing to make his *entrée*, and although he was fully resolved to play the part as well as the adverse circumstances would permit him, he saw and heard so much that was grotesquely absurd, that it was no easy task for him to preserve that air of solemnity which he has to assume in his first scene. However, he played and declaimed like an experienced actor; and he only suffered from the derisive conduct of the audience when they laughed at one of the characters with whom Hamlet chanced to be holding a dialogue. At length the mirth in front of the house communicated itself to those behind; and had it not been for Hamlet's earnest wish that he should not be entirely stopped in the midst of the performance, many of the histrionic *troupe* would have thrown into the faces of the spectators the same "coin" that they had received.

But the most atrocious part of the proceedings was, that some of the actors were now resolved to have a little fun on their own account, and of these the greatest culprit was the Ghost, who, when Horatio, in his colloquies with Hamlet, was standing sufficiently near to the wing to admit of his being touched from behind the scenes, persisted in playing "such fantastic tricks" with his truncheon, as did not "make the angels weep" (because there were none), but as effectually prevented the victim of his merriment from speaking Shakespeare's language otherwise than in the most grotesque fashion. This, of course, pleased the unmerciful audience mightily; and when they saw Rosencrantz and Guildenstern—one with a snuffy white pocket-handkerchief, and both habited in a style which would have made them invaluable in the streets on the 5th of November—their laughter was of the most uproarious character; and Mrs. Pym (wife of the proprietor of the theatre), who occupied one of the private boxes, was already beginning to show signs of indignation.

The play scene, as a matter of course, afforded abundant opportunity for the display of the grotesque element; and the treacherous audience did not fail to take the best advantage of it, while we, who were on

the stage at the time, could have "lashed the rascals naked through the world." When the King rose in a state of commotion at the close of the play, his Majesty's attempt at regal dignity was ludicrously marred by his calling for "light" in the squeakiest and most juvenile of voices—curiously unlike that of the conventional Claudius, whose stentorian tones gave Mr. Partridge, as described by Fielding, such unutterable satisfaction. Denmark's "incestuous, murderous" King is supposed to say, on rising from his seat, "Give me some light—away!" and this should be followed by the exclamation from the courtiers and attendants, "Lights, lights, lights!" But his august Majesty, in the present instance, rather than permit those around him to monopolize the phrase, appeared to think it was entirely *his* business to order the production of the required luminaries, and screeched out the monosyllable, "Lights, lights, lights!" in the manner above described, at the same time rushing off the stage with a grotesque energy which really conveyed the impression that he was going to fetch the lights himself. In order that the royal wish might be speedily gratified, a wag in the audience dashed out of the theatre, and having procured a bunch of *lights* at a neighbouring butcher's, hastily returned to his seat,

which chanced to be near the stage, and brandished the dainty *morceau* before the astonished eyes of the *dramatis personæ*, and the delighted eyes of the spectators!—a piece of shameless "butchery," for which the varlet who perpetrated it ought to have been condemned to swallow the raw flesh in the presence of the united assembly.

But perhaps the most ludicrous event of all, up to this moment, was the manner in which the not unimportant parts of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were acted. The gentlemen representing them displayed an *insouciant* familiarity of tone, so entirely out of harmony with the dramatic purpose of the scene, that the effect was irresistibly comic; and the acme of absurdity would seem to have been reached, when Rosencrantz, in a manner quite as off-hand and confidential as one friend might be expected to display towards another, proceeded to inform the Prince of Denmark that the Queen wished to see him. This information is conveyed by Shakespeare in the following words:—

"She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed."

But the actor on this great occasion, thinking it necessary to impress the fact upon the Prince with redoubled force, added, with the most col-

loquial glibness of utterance, "Upon my word, she does." Whether this liberty with the text was the immediate result of nervousness, or whether it sprang from a determination on the part of the actor to be revenged on his derisive auditory, was not very material, seeing that the end attained was droll enough to gratify the most inordinate lover of burlesque. But through all this merriment, the Lord Hamlet preserved his equanimity, and proceeded in his arduous task with an "undaunted mettle," which was worthy of a far better cause—often betraying a degree of histrionic ability quite exceptional with amateurs, and sometimes exciting the audience to enthusiastic applause.

The next incident which promoted the risibility of our friends and patrons (!) occurred in the dialogue between the two Clowns in the graveyard. There was nothing in the representation of that scene to cause other than legitimate rather than derisive laughter, for both the actors in it were experienced in the business of the stage; but when Clown No. 1 asks Clown No. 2—

"What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?"

the ringleaders of the turbulent crew in front of the boxes, ever on the alert for a favourable chance, called out in full chorus, "Harry Baylis!" Now, Henry Baylis, who was to personate Osric, and was therefore not to make his appearance until the last scene of the play, was thus enabled to form a tolerably correct impression as to the kind of reception in store for him. The part of Osric had been assigned to him because it required comic treatment, and Baylis being always the head and front amongst his jocund club-mates, was expected to afford "infinite merriment," at least of his own sort, if not precisely that of Shakespeare. The moment he came on, with a very clumsy attempt at a light and tripping gait, and uttered the words—

"Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark,"

there broke forth such a storm of applause and derisive laughter, accompanied by the exclamation, "Here's Baylis! Bravo, Baylis!" that he was completely dumb-founded; and if he had ever committed the text to memory (which was always a matter of considerable doubt), he failed to retain it. To add to the perplexity of his position, and that of the distressed gentleman who played Hamlet, he had rushed on to the stage

without his hat, so that when the Prince of Denmark approached the line—

" Your bonnet to its right use,"

he was compelled to remind him of the disastrous omission by a "side speech;" and Baylis, seeing the predicament he was in, hastened to the wing, and brought away the ordinary street hat of the prompter, that important character being most indulgently and zealously sustained by the late Mr. Sterling Coyne.

" Your bonnet to its right use; 'tis for the head,"

exclaimed Hamlet, fearlessly, risking the inevitable consequences; whereupon the leaders of the disorderly faction, seeing Osric about to don the Melton, or Lincoln and Bennet, of the period, shouted with such overwhelming vehemence, that he was scarcely able to utter a word during the remainder of the scene; but was content to say, aside, to Hamlet, that as the villains in front were determined on mischief, he should " go in for the same thing." Poor Mrs. Pym, having, not unnaturally, arrived at the conclusion that the proceedings of the auditory had assumed a form which she was justified in calling " disgraceful," boldly stepped forward to the front of her box, and harangued the company with the most indignant eloquence, finishing

with the pertinent query, "Do you call yourselves gentlemen?"

What was going on upon the stage at this interesting crisis nobody knew, for all eyes and ears were fixed upon the interlude that was being enacted in Mrs. Pym's box. The trusty Hamlet, however, was not at all disposed to allow the play to be brought to a termination at that moment, for he well knew that the final part of the scene afforded him a good opportunity for the exercise of his skill; and therefore he contrived to bring Osric to a sense of his responsibility during the fencing bout with Laertes. Osric, being appealed to by Hamlet for "judgment" as to whether Laertes had been "hit," thought he had now a favourable chance of turning the tables upon his ribald antagonists, and instead of saying—

"A hit, a very palpable hit,"

he exclaimed, "Oh, a hit; pull my leg! a decided poke in the ribs!" Baylis had thus thrown down the gauntlet to our persecuting foes, and poor Hamlet had great difficulty during the remainder of the play in securing a hearing even to himself, although the intolerable interruptions he had received seemed to have given an additional impetus to his exertions.

When the curtain fell it was found, upon calculation, that the tragedy had been played in *seventeen* acts! that is to say, such was the deficiency of scenery that, when a change was to occur, it was generally found necessary to lower the act-drop.

Thus terminated this ever-memorable performance of Shakespeare's tragedy of "Hamlet"—a performance which deserves to be ranked amongst the most remarkable events in the annals of the metropolitan stage; for who shall say how many budding geniuses were prevented, on that occasion, from ultimately eclipsing the brilliancy of the foot-lights, by a course of behaviour on the part of the spectators which would assuredly have tempted any honest-hearted play-goer to exclaim, with Jack Falstaff, "Call you that backing of your friends?"

The farce of "But, however" (written by Henry Mayhew and Henry Baylis) was to have succeeded the tragedy, the principal character—that of Caleb Chizzler, originally played by Wrench at the Haymarket Theatre—being assigned to Baylis; but we were all sufficiently surfeited with "chaff" to render it very unlikely that we should expose ourselves to any further continuance of it, and, therefore, without deigning to offer an apology to the turbulent audience,

we speedily quitted the theatre—all, more or less, inclined to laugh at the exploit, and the majority of us wishing that our places had been on the *other* side of the footlights. So anxious were we to escape from the place while our unruly foes were clamouring for the farce, that we were not long in dressing.

The Osric of the evening was so determined to keep alive the laughter to which his presence had given rise, that he left the scene of his *escapade* without removing the paint or the false eyebrows from his face; and when he appeared at the after-gathering of the club, he was received with laughter quite as tumultuous as that which greeted him when he made his triumphant entry upon the stage.

In regard to the gentleman who personated Hamlet, it only remains to be said that, notwithstanding the determined interruptions under which he laboured, his success was sufficiently assured to tempt him to repeat the performance at a more legitimate theatre, and also to play the character of Sir Edward Mortimer, in "The Iron Chest." He exhibited on both occasions a degree of histrionic skill and knowledge which, with a worse regulated mind, might, peradventure, have caused him to abandon the profession for which he had been trained, and to take altogether to the stage.

With a view to show how thoroughly he had imbued himself with the Shakespearian spirit, and how completely he had dismissed from his mind all disagreeable recollections of the amateur performance, I append a letter which he afterwards addressed to me, from a college whither he had gone to finish his studies in the Oriental languages:—

"Dear George,—If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart, persuade that waterfly, Osric—*alias* Baylis, I mean *Mr.* Baylis—to accompany thine ever-admired and admirable self down to these academic shades next Saturday. Let the wings of an afternoon coach, which starts at 3 o'clock from the Bell and Crown, Holborn, or from Bishopsgate Street (the Swan or Bull, I think, but you will learn at the George and Blue Boar, Holborn), at 5 o'clock, convey thee hither. Come, if in your vitals charity resideth. Come and let us have an intellectual Sunday together. The snow is evaporating, and all looks brisk. If I asked Mayhew, I know you would never come, or Baylis either. His animal-magnetic disposition would dawdle, dawdle on till the term was over. I therefore now put my trust in you to bring Baylis with you, and dissipate my weakness and my melancholy. If thou art as just a man as ever my conversation coped withal, do not desert me now.

"How are all our friends? A goodly list—merry men all! Stop—I sacrifice a Manilla cheroot to

their air-drawn forms, as they flit over my admiring vision in spectral array.

"Now, in sober English — and I am miserably sober—do come down with our old and facetious friend. Tell him I would have written to him also, to have asked him, but was not aware of his *ubi et quo*. Write to me before you come, and say when you are coming. I have a thousand things to talk of. Remember me to Mayhew and all friends, and believe me ever

"Yours, till death,

"HAMLET.

"P.S.—Your health! I have not forgotten my part, you see."

The great actors on the memorable occasion which I have thus faintly described ceased, not very long afterwards, to meet in social union, and many of them disappeared altogether. Mr. Hassell (the King), whose constitution was delicate, and whose success in his art was not such as to produce the purest contentment of mind, died in the meridian of life. Mr. Pym (Polonius), who retained possession of the theatre for many years, but never again to witness such a matchless performance, also went the way of all flesh. Mr. Hoffman (Laertes) became in time a well-known member of the legal profession. Mr. Roche (Rosencrantz) was soon called to the Bar, and

having been of essential service to Sir Richard Bethel when that distinguished lawyer was Attorney-General, was rewarded by the appointment which he holds; Mr. Baylis (Osric) continued for many years to be the head of various social gatherings—notably that of the contributors to *Punch*, as already described in this volume—and died at the age of fifty-nine, leaving behind him a blank as a convivial humorist which has never yet been filled up. Mr. Bayne (Marcellus), who was at that time a clerk in an attorney's office, emigrated to Swan River, to practise on his own account; and if he has not already returned to this country, I trust that he may soon do so, bringing with him a substantial fortune, for lawyers are not, in every case, quite undeserving of pecuniary advantages. Of the two Gravediggers, Mr. T. Lucombe retired with a comfortable independence, gained by his success as a librarian at Brighton; and his daughter, as before stated, became the wife of Mr. Sims Reeves, the eminent singer. As to the Second Gravedigger, I fear he was not quite so distinguished as the rest of us, for his very name has faded from my memory; and as to myself (the illustrious Horatio)—well, I have the candour to confess that I never again essayed to delight the world as a

tragedian; and I am grateful to think that, after a toilsome newspaper life of more than a quarter of a century, I can laugh at the past, and say, "*I am here!*"* Mr. Henry Mayhew (the Ghost) in the course of the next two years projected *Punch*, as I have previously stated, and is still engaged in literary pursuits. The young aspirant who represented Hamlet went to fulfil an important mission in the East, where he achieved the highest marks of distinction.

In trying to call to mind the ribald jesters who took a prominent part in the rebellious derision to which, with the exception of the Hamlet, the Thespian heroes were subjected, it is by no means under the influence of a retributive spirit that I remark the fact that the boldest offenders (some five or six in number) have long since gone to their last resting-place.

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* Fechter—"The Duke's Motto."

CHAPTER X.

"A rolling Stone gathers no Moss"—Fallacy of the Proverb—W. M. Thackeray, the writer, and J. L. Hatton, the Composer—Recollections of celebrated Musicians—The Amenities of Music—A Novel Entertainment, and its Results—Musical Tours—An Opera Troupe in a Storm—The Romance of a Tenor's Life.

THERE can be little doubt that these heterogeneous records will leave me open to the charge of belonging to that family of rolling stones which, as we are told by our grandmothers and great-aunts, gather no moss. That I have gathered no moss it would be ungrateful in me to aver; but I need have no hesitation in saying that it has never yet assumed that permanent golden tint which speculative friends have led me to anticipate; and if it has been my lot to be a rolling stone, I have not found a Sisyphus to send me to the top of the hill, setting aside all question as to the chance of my remaining there. The proverb is certainly somewhat musty, and is not free from that dogmatical taint which takes it out of the category of those moral

apothegms strictly to be relied upon for philosophical accuracy. This is not the place for a disquisition on the peculiar properties of rolling stones, or I might be tempted, the subject being a suggestive one, to bring forward many instances in which moss has been gathered in large proportions by a stone which has always kept moving; while your dull lump of immovable granite has ended life as he commenced it—conferring no benefits and receiving none; and if he has learnt where moss was to be found, he has allowed others to gather it rather than roll his corporeal substance in the proper direction for it. Then, again, mark with what a keen sense of enjoyment our revolving friend, who has not adhered to some sulky corner of the world, eyes the material which he has struggled hard to find! He has not remained motionless amongst a heap of other compounds similar to himself, ready for the good things that Providence sends us, to fall in showers upon him; but has travelled to remote parts—has changed his sphere of action from time to time, and when, at length, he has discovered where moss (in other words, riches) was to be found, he has sought it and gathered it. Despite, therefore, the moral axiom, which one could wish Charles Lamb had exploded with his "Popular Fal-

lacies," it may be fearlessly stated that a rolling stone does and will gather moss, and that the moss he gathers surpasses all others, because it is the fruit of an active mind and painstaking labour.

Books have been written on *precious* stones; but how much might be said about our rough-hewn quarries, where we may not only realize the poet's idea of "sermons in stones," but may find also objects in some degree typical of human nature! We have here, it is hoped, put in a fair plea on behalf of the stone that is said to gather no moss, and we have done some justice (it is absolutely refreshing to find that this small divergence has led to the temporary setting aside of the "eternal *ego*"*) to that lumpish geological curiosity which expects to find moss without attempting to move towards the spot where it lies. But there are other stones that may be taken as typifying metaphorically the human form divine, and amongst these it will not be thought necessary to mention more than two—viz., the smooth, shiny pebble, which, though it is capable of rolling, does so as little as possible; and the sharp, cutting, ill-grained flint, which, if it could roll, would inevitably decline the task. Your smooth-surfaced pebble has a smooth tongue also, and he can

* "*Self*, that burr that will stick to one."—*Shelley's Letters.*

look at you smiling, and "murder whilst he smiles." He will roll far enough if you guarantee him payment for doing so; and he will tell you that every revolution he makes is for your benefit, not his, until at length he rolls headlong into the Court of Chancery or the Court of Bankruptcy, with you (his client) upon his back, and then turns his smooth, smiling face full upon you, and, in answer to your gentle remonstrances, says he is very sorry, but he didn't make the law! No, but the law makes him; and how many poor devils has he caused the law to unmake by depriving them of the moss which has cost their parents and themselves years to garner up! These are literally the precious stones which usually accumulate large quantities of moss; but then it is generally a material which has taken others a life of toil and anxiety to gather. Then comes the sharp, cutting, coarse-grained flint. This stone was formerly employed as a weapon in warfare, but in later times it has been superseded by steel, which, in turn, has left it to those baser uses to which it would seem to be especially adapted. Fathers, they say, have flinty hearts; and is not your bill-discounter sometimes—nay, generally—a father? and is it not he that paves the way—yes, paves the way (how naturally the word leaps to the pen, though "cuts the way" would, perhaps, be more appropriate)

for your satin-faced varlet, who has got hold of the moss which the rolling stone has gathered? And they divide the spoil between them, leaving the lump of inanimate granite to wonder at the successful results of perseverance on the one part, and chicanery and cunning on the other! If then we are to look to our silicious deposits for a type of humanity, let us make choice of the "rolling stone," for it gathereth moss by means of honest, though changeful, industry.

In this accidental digression I think an excuse may be found for my calling attention to a few incidents connected with another phase of my varied career. The firm of Cramer, Beale, and Co., being engaged in conducting certain important undertakings for the entertainment of the public, employed me, in a literary capacity, to assist them. While thus occupied I had the satisfaction of meeting in the shop one afternoon Mr. Thackeray, who had come there to purchase a pianoforte, and was availing himself of the proffered services of Mr. J. L. Hatton, the composer, to test them. His mission fulfilled, and the great writer and the great composer having "tried conclusions" together as well as instruments, with a view to the "immortal verse" of the one being "married" to the music of the other, Mr. Thackeray expressed some surprise at finding me ap-

parently an *attaché* of the establishment; and on my telling him that I was retained there, he said, laughingly, "What for? To write songs?"—"No," I replied, somewhat amused at the jest; "song-writing is quite out of my way, for I never attempted such a thing in my life." In the course of time, however, I found that I could not possibly pass several hours a day surrounded by accumulated piles of music, and in constant intercourse with our favourite composers, without seizing the opportunity of trying if I could string together "words"* in a sufficiently lyrical form to be worthy of being set to harmonious flats and sharps. The result was, that I was soon associated, in *words* as well as deeds, with many musical geniuses, whose friendship I am unfeignedly pleased to have cultivated:—Balfe, Wallace, G. A. Macfarren, Frank Mori, J. L. Hatton, E. Land, Alfred Mellon, E. Silas, Dr. Rimbault, W. H. Weiss, &c. It was difficult, however, to secure for chamber songs (that is to say, songs not written for the stage) a "grinding popularity," as Mr. Macfarren expressed

* Dr. Charles Mackay, the author of many of our best modern lyrics, always objected to the use of this term as applied to his poetry, and contended that it would be equally complimentary to designate the music as "crotchets and quavers."

it, such as often attaches to choice melodies which have stood the infallible test of an operatic performance. Hence I discovered, in the course of some eighteen months, that song-writing was too precarious an employment to command my permanent attention, and therefore I left it to more qualified practitioners, in the hope that prose would continue to be a less capricious friend. My recollections, however, of my musical associates are of the most agreeable kind, and I have in my possession several letters which indicate the satisfactory nature of our intercourse, and the extreme pains a popular composer will bestow upon his very responsible work. I select a few communications at random. They are from Mr. G. A. Macfarren, who was once described to me by one of our recognised critics as the foremost composer of the English school—that is to say, writers of pure English music, as contradistinguished from those who have based their style on the works of continental masters.

"I have seen your alterations of 'bessie,'* which

[Suppose the above to be blushing hesitation] I do

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* The name of a song I had just written under the great disadvantage of the music being supplied *first;* and I almost despaired of being able to make the words "fit" the notes.

not think improvements. Chappell ditto. Do take and try if you cannot knock it into something more worthy of your growing reputation, for I assure you it is not at present. He has the copy, which he will give you.

"It is positive wormwood to me to bore you so about this confounded song, but now that you have had thus much trouble, you may as well go through with it and make it a first-class thing at last. Go ahead, and astonish us all with the rapidity and excellence of your production.

"I will spell 'bessie' with a capital when I think she deserves it."*

"Mr. Wilbye Cooper writes me that he has spoken to you about writing me some words for a duet, and that you are willing. In this case please to go ahead. You must do something (eight lines, more or less) that will do for an *Andante*, and something of a different character and measure that will do for a *Cabaletta*. It may be of a personal character, or it may not, according to your inspiration. If you make it a dialogue it would be desirable to have it for two known characters, such as Paul and Virginia, Edwin and Angelina, Romeo and Juliet,

* The song never merited the trouble which Mr. Macfarren so kindly bestowed upon it; and although I succeeded at last in giving it a better shape, my lines did not, I think, please either him or the public. The air was, however, charmingly graceful.

Graciosa and Percinet, or any others into whose story the audience would enter at once. Or you might say, 'We will,' &c., or you might, as in all Mendelssohn's part songs, speak generally.

"I left 'The Rustic Maid' for you yesterday at Cramer's, done never so high for Mr. Genge; and Mr. Beale will of course understand that it is not to be published from that copy. I wish you luck with your negotiation. I am glad to learn that Beale promises so well for 'The Dream,' and 'The Home.'"*

"Mori has given me your poem, for which many thanks. I shall have great pleasure in setting it to music, and then may fortune find me a flourishing publisher and a grinding popularity."

In speaking of my occupation at that period, I am glad to take this opportunity of bearing testimony to the good feeling generally displayed by the musical *savans* with whom I thus became acquainted. Whether in setting a song, or trying a song, or reading a song, or in fulfilling any other congenial duty required of them, I invariably found that their actions were as harmonious as their music. Professional jealousies, of course, sometimes arose, and one composer was not always ready to admit the merit

* Two songs set by Macfarren, and called respectively, "Oh, Dream no more of Woes departed," and "The Dear Old Home."

of a new production by a formidable rival; but every allowance may be made for such inherent weaknesses; for the public have little idea with what discordant elements the disseminators of concord are obliged to contend. In a word, the composers are generally as much at the mercy of singers as dramatic authors are at the mercy of actors, save that in the latter case no difficulty is ever raised on the plea of non-adaptability of voice to the tones sought to be evoked; whereas in the former case it very often happens that a singer, not altogether pleased with the air which he has been requested to "try," with the view to bringing it before the public under the sanction of his name, runs through a long series of objections; and if at last he is prevailed upon to accept the flattering proposition which has been made to him, he will sometimes withdraw from the obligation, after one or two performances, on the ground that the work was not encored, or on some other pretext equally frivolous. So that, in fact, the child of the musician's brain is literally strangled in its infancy by those who should assist in promoting its advancement. "If Monsieur This or Madame That will sing it," the composer is fain to say to the publisher with whom he is treating for terms, "the song

is made, and will be worth ——" "But if he or she" (as the case may be) "should refuse to sing it," says the publisher, artfully suggesting the unpleasant alternative, "what then?" The composer can only answer by shrugging his shoulders, and indicating by a forlorn expression of countenance that he is prepared to trust to the mercy of fate.

In illustration of the fact I have just advanced I may mention an instance of the kind which happened on the occasion of my being engaged on a semi-musical expedition with Mr. Henry Mayhew and Mr. J. L. Hatton. We were at Brighton at the time, and Mr. Hatton had just submitted to Messrs. Cramer and Beale a new song, called, "Come live with me, and be my Love," which it was hoped and expected that Mario would sing, as he had repeatedly sung with considerable effect the popular composition by the same writer, "Good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye!" and a telegram reached the anxious musician, requesting to know the amount he demanded for his work. The answer returned was laconic and graphic: "If M. sings it, five-and-twenty pounds." M. *did* sing it, and with such a sympathetic charm of expression, that one may well believe it proved to be worth the sum required for it.

The expedition to which I have just incidentally alluded merits something more than a mere passing notice in these pages, as the circumstances arising out of it were so completely unforeseen that they must be indelibly engraven on the memories of the luckless adventurers who were connected with it—viz., Walter Maynard (the *entrepreneur*), Mr. Hatton, Mr. Mayhew and his son, and myself.

The tour which had been organized was for the exhibition of an entertainment, called "Punch on the Platform," in which Henry Mayhew was to give a few familiar illustrations of the hunchback and his associates, and to introduce a succession of typical characters from the London streets, while Mr. Hatton was to be his accompanist on the pianoforte, in the execution of certain appropriate comic songs composed by himself, and written by Mayhew. I was placed in the responsible position of superintendent of the monetary arrangements. The necessary preliminaries having been arranged for a visit to various parts of the coast, Brighton was the first place on our list, and the time to be occupied in all was about three weeks. The prospect at Brighton was not, it must be confessed, a very promising one, for the visitors and residents at that ultra-fashionable watering-place are

not precisely of the class of people who would be tempted by so equivocal a title as "Punch on the Platform," particularly as the programme which had been issued shadowed forth the alarming fact that the audience were to be made acquainted with the habits and idiosyncrasies of costermongers and other notable illustrations of street-life.

The evening announced for the entertainment arrived, and the performers were ready for the discharge of their respective duties—Mr. Hatton at the pianoforte, and Mr. Mayhew in the centre of the platform; but whether the latter lost heart at seeing so meagre an attendance, or whether it suddenly occurred to him that the task he had imposed upon himself was a little wanting in dignity for a man of his literary reputation, did not transpire; but he had not proceeded far before it became very clear that he would never get satisfactorily to the end of it, and he gradually "broke down," leaving the audience more amused than offended at so singular and unexpected a collapse.

On afterwards inquiring into the immediate cause of the mischance, I received the perplexing intelligence that seated in the front row of the stalls were Mr. Mayhew's father and sister; and the former was

seen fixing his eyes upon his son with such a profound look of paternal regret and vexation, that the spirit of the latter sunk within him, and he could no longer brook the ordeal. On the following morning an interview took place between the father and son, when the old gentleman made such a solemn appeal to the latter, as to his compromising the respectability of his family by continuing so "degrading" a pursuit, that he determined to abandon it. Despite, however, the paternal remonstrances, we had no alternative but to beg Mr. Mayhew to proceed on the tour, at least to those places where there was not sufficient time to admit of a postponement; but he was inexorable, and "Punch on the Platform" never had the good fortune to be included among the recognised "institutions" in this age of platform entertainments.

It might well be imagined that letters of complaint would come in from local agents, pointing out the injury which had been inflicted upon them, and urging the necessity for their pecuniary claims being satisfied; but as money questions have no especial charms (at least *on paper*) for disinterested persons, I may at once pass over this part of the subject, and draw the little episode to a close, by relating that Mr. Mayhew and his son started shortly for London, leaving Mr.

Hatton and myself to laugh at the singularity of the exploit, and to condole with each other on the disastrous result of an enterprise which we were well assured had sufficient material in it to delight the whole world, and to enrich us with incalculable gains!

The funds at our disposal having been disbursed in the discharge of the customary liabilities, it was necessary that either Mr. Hatton or I should go to London for the purpose of explaining our position to the *entrepreneur;* and this duty, in the proper course of things, fell to my lot. Arrived in town, I addressed a letter to my companion at Brighton, requesting him to attend to certain little matters which I had been obliged to leave undone before I went away, and received from him a quaint, good-natured reply, concluding with the words, "We must have a long chat and a laugh at our misadventure when we meet again." A chat we certainly had —and a long one; but as to the laugh, I am constrained to admit that it was very far from affording an apt illustration of the dogma, "let those laugh that *win*."

A rival "tourist" of that time, Mr. German Reed, writing from Ramsgate (whence we were to have proceeded, after filling our coffers at Brighton), and being

ignorant of the fact that the entertainment had come to an untimely end, said, in a friendly letter addressed to me, in reference to our *fiasco*, "Tell me what you are doing with Mayhew's tour. It was a mistake your not coming to Ramsgate. They told us they had sold nearly 30*l.* worth of tickets." Indeed, news similar to this reached us from the various towns we had intended to visit; but Mr. Mayhew's scruples were such that he could not be induced to screw his courage to the sticking-place, and hence no attempt was made to give renewed life to the undertaking.

> "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
> And thus the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
> And enterprises of great pith and moment,
> With this regard, their currents turn awry,
> And lose the name of action."

This little adventure is told as nearly as possible as it occurred; and I think it may be truly said, not only that all who were concerned therein can afford to laugh at it, as an amusing though somewhat unprofitable *contretemps*, but that neither Mr. Mayhew's position as a man of letters, nor that of Mr. Hatton as a musical composer, will be in the least degree lessened by the recital.

Mr. Walter Maynard (whose hereditary name I am

not here authorized to disclose) has related, in his entertaining work, "The Enterprising Impressario," the details of many of those expeditions called "Musical Tours;" and as my experience in such matters was gained entirely under his auspices, I have no hesitation in recording a few incidents which came within my knowledge in the course of a succession of journeys with some of the chief ornaments of the Italian operatic stage. I purposely omit all mention of names, in order that the reader may supply them, according to his or her especial taste and predilection; but I may confidently state that, although I have given a little "local colouring" to the events described, the narrative has its foundation on a substratum of truth.

I do not propose to enter into any elaborate detail of the every-day life of a *prima donna*, or to describe the fascination which surrounds the social movements of a *primo tenore;* but the lovers of music and musicians will be glad to learn that, notwithstanding the jealousies and rivalries which are said to attach to the profession, the most antagonistic natures, such as Lucrezia Borgia and Amina, Caspar and Elvino, Oroveso and Don Giovanni, Fidelio and Semiramide, are sometimes brought together in the most friendly

and harmonious intercourse. Occasionally little disturbances arise, but they are soon quelled by the dexterous *impressario;* for it is remarkable with what ease the fury of a tragedy queen may be suddenly changed into the gentleness of a village belle—with what skill the wildest notes of jealousy or revenge may be made to give place to the softest cadenzas of contrition.

It is less, however, in the private life of artists on a professional tour that points of singularity arise, than in the circumstances attending their public capacity. For example, it cannot be supposed that the area of a provincial theatre, the limited proportions of which are only adapted to the convenience of the few, can be easily rendered capable of seating the many who are drawn together by the irresistible attractions presented by a *troupe* of Italian singers. Hence considerable excitement is often provoked both before and behind the curtain, and it sometimes happens that when the evening arrives, the aristocratic portion of the audience are mortified to find the proscenium boxes (on the occupation of which certain of the local dignitaries had previously set their affections) have been converted into dressing-rooms for the actors. The confusion arising from this circumstance can be readily imagined, and *might* be described; but that

something even more diverting has at the same time occurred in the costumier's department. It happened that on one occasion certain members of the company, having lost half their dresses on the road, were running about in a state of frenzy and despair, cursing their unlucky stars for the ignominious predicament they were placed in, and provoking some merriment by their exclamations that Pollio could not possibly appear before the audience in Wellington boots, or that Ernesto dare not attempt "*com e gentil*" in a shooting jacket! Such incidents as these frequently arise to mitigate the ills which managerial flesh is heir to, and it is well that they do occur, for otherwise modern minstrelsy would be entirely devoid of romance, and the performers would have nothing to relieve the dull monotony of popular applause.

It sometimes happens that the doors, including the stage entrance, are so besieged by people, that the artists cannot possibly make their way into the theatre, and while the audience inside are clamouring for Signor ——, he is endeavouring to force a passage through the crowd outside! During one memorable tour this difficulty occurred to a prominent member of the party whose adventures I am now recording.

The opera to be played was "The Barber of Seville," and the artist was announced to appear as Figaro, but when the curtain was about to rise Figaro was struggling hard to obtain ingress to the theatre, and not being able to accomplish that somewhat desirable object, he emphatically exclaimed to the tumultuous crowd, "What! would you see 'The Barber of Seville' without the Barber!"

"Make way for the Barber!" was the immediate response, and Figaro was lifted upon the shoulders of the mob into the box-entrance, whence he found his way to the stage, which was already "waiting" to receive him. While he was tickling the ears of the audience with the "*Largo al factotum,*" a gentleman in shirt sleeves, seated in front of the gallery, was amusing the company in general and himself in particular, by beating time with a cotton umbrella, and as the baton of the conductor waved high in the air, he kept up a corresponding movement with such determined perseverance that the audience were disturbed from their propriety, and the gravity of the performers was seriously jeopardized; but the stentorian voice of the Figaro soon drowned all ebullition of feeling, and the oft-repeated threat of "throw him over," was not carried into effect.

I need hardly say that our kings and queens of song are not only liable to mischances in their provincial undertakings, but are often placed in positions which expose them to strange perplexities. They are but fellow-mortals, after all, and are, of course, bound to submit to the same troubles and vicissitudes which, as common wayfarers, they cannot hope to avert.

On one of these expeditions, a concert was given, at which the attractions were of more than usual interest, the great dignitaries of the town having promised their patronage, and a large expense having been incurred to insure a most successful and profitable performance. The *prima donna* was in admirable voice, and the whole *troupe* seemed bent on doing themselves and the public the fullest justice in their power. The concert proceeded, and Madame —— had already received more than one enthusiastic ovation; but at length the audience were wrought up to such a state of excitement, that their feelings found vent in the most novel expressions of approbation, betraying that tone of familiarity which provincial connoisseurs are prone to adopt towards their musical favourites. Amongst the company in the body of the hall was a very primitive-looking gentleman, attired after a fashion which was anything

but *the* fashion; and his appearance was no more befitting a concert-room, than a "figure of fun" would be becoming a conventicle. He listened, however, with wrapt attention to the bewitching strains which the *prima donna* poured forth with her accustomed power and taste; but he did not seem at all to comprehend the terms in which certain portions of the audience gave token of their delight; for he chanced to be seated in the midst of a stormy brotherhood of critics, who affected that peculiar style of phraseology which is assumed by the *habitués* of the Italian Opera House, when their sense of gratification has risen to boiling point. An *encore* had been demanded, and was gracefully responded to by the *prima donna*, who was retiring with all the honours which had been showered upon her, when the primitive countryman, standing up and displaying his portly dimensions to the astonished multitude, exclaimed, with all the coolness imaginable, and without changing a muscle of his stolid face, "*Egad, the lass can sing a bit!*" With him the force of approbation could no further go, and he resumed his seat quite satisfied that he had borne a fair share of testimony to the winning powers of the enchantress.

At the close of the entertainment, when the artists

were waiting in their retiring room for the arrival of the carriages which were to convey them to their hotel, and when several gentlemen were aspiring to the honour of escorting the *prima donna* to her vehicle, the admiring countryman, who had so delicately appreciated her exertions, actually appeared before her, and making an ungainly bow, which almost destroyed his equilibrium, exclaimed, "You be in good fettle to-night, *Miss.* I heard 'em shouting all sorts of things that don't belong to my lingo; but I said you could sing a bit; and I want you to accept a small return from me."

"Who is this good gentleman?" said Madame ——, much more amused than annoyed at his intrusive politeness.

The peolpe present were too much astonished, and even chagrined, to attempt an answer to this question; but the worthy enthusiast saved them the trouble, by continuing his expressions of approval. "I thought," said he, "that my Kate could do a little in that line, but she must shut up shop after this. And if you wont be angry with me, *Miss*, I should like to show, in a substantial way, what I feel in these matters." He then produced a long purse, and taking therefrom two sovereigns, held them towards Madame ——, say-

ing at the same time, "It is but a trifle, *Miss;* but if you'll accept it, I'll come and do you a good turn the next time you show yourself amongst us."

Our distinguished *artiste* assured her would-be patron that she neither accepted nor required such marks of favour—that she was sufficiently rewarded by the applause of her friends, without taking any pecuniary gift beyond that which she was entitled to, and that she begged, with all thanks, to be excused. Nothing dismayed, however, by this graceful refusal, the countryman persevered, saying, that he should not think he had deserved the treat he had received if the lady would not allow him to pay something for it.

A gentleman present suggested that he had paid for his admittance, and nothing more could possibly be expected from him. To this he replied, that he did not consider the payment for his seat absolved him from all further obligation in such an instance as the present, and he must beg that *Miss* would accept a trifle in compliment to himself.

Not wishing to prolong the discussion, as the carriage had now arrived, and thinking, perhaps, that, after all, it would be better to humour the honest fellow's good intention, Madame —— took the two sovereigns, with a significant smile, and a brief ex-

pression of thanks. On the following morning she caused tickets to the like amount to be sent to the eccentric donor's address, for another concert which was about to take place in the course of the same week: and thus the strange incident terminated.

Whether or not the hero of the two sovereigns was present at the subsequent concert did not transpire, but on the morning fixed upon for the departure of the opera *troupe*, the same individual drove up to the hotel in a tax-cart; and as Madame —— was standing in the hall, preparatory to leaving, he placed at her feet a large basket filled with the choicest flowers. The *cantatrice* was no less astonished than pleased at so agreeable a sight, and was about to offer some remark, when our unsophisticated friend said he had often been ashamed to see a handful of "nosegays" thrown at a singer; and he wanted to show that, if flowers were to be used as tributes to genius, they ought to be bestowed in something like a liberal spirit. It need hardly be said that the floral gift, so strangely and abruptly offered, was much more cheerfully accepted than the pecuniary one, the value of which had been so gracefully and promptly returned. The satisfaction of the appreciative countryman was now complete, and Madame —— never afterwards visited

the same town without receiving from him a similar token of respect and goodwill.

Amongst other places included in one of these tours, we had engaged to visit Dublin, and on the day of our departure for that city, the English coast was disturbed by a tempest of such unusual severity, that many captains objected to risk their vessels and their lives by venturing to leave the shore; but so urgent was the necessity for our party to reach the other side of the Channel (where the world-renowned names were blazoned forth on the walls of the Irish capital), that we readily embarked, full of anxiety lest the anger of Neptune should not only destroy our valuable lives, but deprive an expectant public of a long looked-for performance. It would be superfluous to describe the distresses incidental to our tempestuous voyage—distresses from which neither rank, nor wealth, nor talent, nor fame, can claim exemption. Even the majesty of genius must humble itself before the monarch of the main; and the enrapturing voice of the syren must give way to the "blustering railer," whose discordant notes render all other sounds inaudible. Melody is said to "float through the air;" but assuredly it sinks in the turbulent waters, and it would be impossible, perhaps, to discover a more striking contrast than is

to be observed between the position of a favourite singer when she is enchanting the ears of her audience, and that of the same fair warbler when exposed to the "pelting of the pitiless storm." Seated between our *prima donna* and a rival songstress on this momorable voyage, was a young *cantatrice* of humble pretensions, whose means of consoling herself have an interest worth recording. She had two little children far away at home, and she would rather, she said, they were on board, to share her fate (for the passengers one and all feared it was their lot to be drowned) than that they should be left to mourn her loss; when suddenly she reflected that she was sitting between two of the most renowned heroines of the lyric stage, and it was hardly possible, she thought, that so much genius could be destroyed at one fell swoop! That idea sustained her through the perilous voyage, and she was *not* drowned. Could it be that she thought of the exclamation attributed to the illustrious Roman?—"What dost thou fear? Thou hast Cæsar on board!"

The vessel arrived safely in port; and the hearty ovation paid to the *troupe* by the citizens of Dublin proved how warmly they appreciated the considerate forbearance of King Neptune in not having deprived them of the treat that was in store for them.

I am almost tempted to give the reader some further insight into the private life of an opera singer; but that I know not by what assumed right I could make the world as wise as myself in regard to matters with which, after all, the world has nothing whatever to do. People are too apt to discuss the personal characters and habits of their stage favourites, as if, because they derive pleasure and entertainment from them in public, they may claim the privilege of learning the history of their domestic concerns, and of sitting in judgment upon their social merits as well as upon their professional abilities. There can be no valid reason why a public performer should be subjected to a sort of inquisition, from which at least a lyric charmer who is supposed to soothe the savage breast by her dulcet tones, ought certainly to be free.

In justice, however, to singers, as a body, and in contradiction of the commonly received theory, that Signor This or Mr. That is as much addicted to pouring liquids into his throat as he is to emitting liquid sounds from it, I am here induced to say, that during my experience of musical companies I have ever found them to be uniformly moderate in their food, and temperate in their drink. Maccaroni is their especial weakness, and light claret or beer their

favourite beverage, and I never saw one of them taste, during the interval of the performances, anything stronger than ale or stout, and that very generally in a wine-glass!—But stop! I'm betrayed into the very error which I have expressed my desire and determination to avoid; and lest I should inadvertently tell the reader how many cups of Bohea a *prima donna* drinks, and how many cigars a tenor smokes; what time the big drum goes to bed; and at what hour the first fiddle wakes up; whether the *basso profondo* takes sugar in his coffee; and whether the *contralto* eats peas with a knife;—lest, in fact, I should disclose all the little peculiarities and eccentricities which came to my knowledge—I will at once proceed to relate another incident which occurred during the expedition now especially referred to.

Wondrous things have been accomplished by skilled musicians! and their powers of memory are sometimes remarkable; but even the best informed on such subjects will scarcely credit the statement that on this identical tour an entire opera of Rossini's was once played by the orchestra without a single bar of music to assist them. This event occurred at ——, also on an occasion when "Il Barbiere" was announced for performance, and the business at the

box-office augured a very large attendance. By some unaccountable accident the music of the opera was left behind in London, and the fact was not discovered until it was too late to supply the omission. The music was not to be obtained in the town; and it was found to be impossible, or at least extremely hazardous, to substitute any other composition for the favourite opera announced. What was to be done? The singers were panic-stricken, and the band began to sound their instruments as if they expected to find new virtues in them. It was left to the conductor to solve the difficulty, and he solved it by saying—much to the consternation of all concerned—that "they must play the opera through without the music." The band willingly assented, and so successfully was the task accomplished, that not a single fact transpired to indicate to the audience that the music was performed from memory! In token of his appreciation of this important service, the *entrepreneur*, Mr. F. Beale, invited the whole *troupe* to a banquet, where all the "voices" and all the "instruments" sat down together in the most harmonious friendship, and nothing occurred to disturb their enjoyment, save the repeated attempts of the double bass to obtain a hearing while he expressed his acknowledgments of the honour which

their entertainer had conferred upon them. But this duty, though not left to his tender mercies, was judiciously discharged by another, and Mr. Beale, in responding to the compliment, produced such general satisfaction amongst his auditors, that one and all gave note of their approval in sounds much more vociferous than harmonious.

One of our journeys on this "grand tour" involved the necessity of our starting at six o'clock in the morning, and as the railway station happened to be at some distance from the hotel, the party were compelled to rise between four and five. The knowledge of this fact rendered one of the tenors anything but amiable and agreeable on the previous evening; for it was then the depth of winter, and Signor —— was not accustomed to quit his bed till midday, even in the height of summer. However, he had received a telegraphic despatch, stating that the morning concert at which he was announced to sing could not be postponed, and that if the company did not appear at the time legal proceedings would be taken. Fulfilment of the engagement was, therefore, unavoidable, and the party were all up in time to eat a hasty breakfast, with the exception of our friend the before-mentioned tenor; and the trouble of awakening him to a sense of our

joint responsibility (for I had undertaken to insure his arrival at our destination) was so great, that a stall at the Opera for an entire season would scarcely compensate for it. The panels of his chamber-door were almost shattered in the attempt to rouse him; and when at length he made his appearance, it was quite evident that he was fully prepared to be too late for the train, the hour of starting having actually arrived, and the distance to the station being about a mile and a half. A fly was at the door, and some few of his professional brethren were awaiting to accompany him, knowing that, without him, they might as well spare themselves the journey, the magic of his name being an all-powerful attraction at the impending concert. More asleep than awake, and without so much as a cup of tea or coffee to fortify him for the wintry prospect before him, he was conveyed, almost by force of arms, from the hotel. Arrived at the station, it was discovered that, owing to an accident, the train would be upwards of half an hour after its time. Whereupon the wobegone tenor was so chagrined at the discomfiting haste with which he had been driven to the scene, that he paced up and down the platform in a fit of the most virtuous indignation; and when steps

were taken to pacify him, he expressed himself profoundly disgusted that "he was not informed the train was going to be late, as in that case he should have had time for his breakfast and to get his voice in order!" To add to the unpleasantness of the predicament, he had been obliged, in common with the others of the party, to array himself not in costume for travelling, but in such attire as would befit the concert-room, as the time would not allow of any change of *toilette* on the arrival of the *troupe* at their destination.

The appearance of these musical constellations (who are not supposed to shine except at the night time) on the railway platform at six o'clock on a winter's morning, apparelled in such a manner as to be more suggestive of "stepping out of a band-box" than into a railway-carriage, was certainly an amusing illustration of the peculiar straits to which our lyric favourites are liable to be exposed; and to their credit it must be said that, although they may sometimes be defective in voice, they are invariably effective in costume. 'Tis true they are amply rewarded for all they do; but who shall gainsay the fact that they sometimes pay dearly for their fame, in submitting to intrusions on their privacy, and in

being persecuted by inquisitive and reckless admirers. I need not remind my lady readers with what ardent determination members of their sex often pursue, from the stage to his own dwelling, a popular tenor, whose enchanting strains have so taken possession of their thoughts, that they merge every other passion in the one prevailing desire to catch a near glimpse of him, and, if possible, hear the sound of his voice addressed to their enraptured selves. As an instance of the influence exercised over the gentle daughters of Eve by the favoured sons of song, the following somewhat romantic incident may be thought worthy of notice.

One fine afternoon, our hero of the tenor voice was walking by the seashore, and was a little perplexed to find that two young ladies, prettily and tastefully dressed, were watching his movements, and evidently guiding their steps according to the direction he took. If he stooped to pick up a shell, or stood to regard with interest the rising and receding of the glittering water, he observed that the two fair ones immediately halted; and when he proceeded on his way, they kept within so short a distance of him, that he could not possibly escape their notice. Happy tenor! to be the cynosure of innocent eyes, lighted up by admira-

tion of your all-absorbing self! At length he discovered that one of the nymphs was walking in advance of her companion, and was approaching nearer and nearer to the brink of the sea. They had now arrived at a spot which was not often visited by pedestrians, and it is not very likely that Signor —— would have ventured so far, but that he was curious to learn the end of the adventure, and therefore he continued on his way, even to a jutting rock, beyond which it seemed dangerous to proceed. Turning round for a moment, he observed the foremost of the two damsels take off her shawl and bonnet, and deliberately jump into the sea, which at this point was some two or three feet below the level of the shore. "Save her! save her!" cried the terror-stricken companion of the suicide; "my sister will be drowned!" That the two adventurous damsels were sisters might be easily divined, and the singular predicament in which they—or at least one of them —had placed Signor —— may be imagined with equal facility. Here was, indeed, a situation which demanded all his chivalry! At a sequestered spot on the lone sea-coast one of the ornaments of the operatic stage seemed thus lured to his own destruction by two romantic sisters, one of whom had im-

perilled her life, and the other now loudly implored him to preserve it! He who had so often received the plaudits of admiring thousands, was suddenly called upon to play a part, without the accustomed sounds to stimulate his efforts and to gladden his ears. The position was momentous, and Signor —— was equal to the emergency. In an instant he had disburdened himself of his hat and coat, and the fair lady was safely restored to her sister's arms. "What could be her motive for attempting so rash an act?" was the natural inquiry that was made, when the event came to be known; and a truthful solution of the mystery was soon supplied by members of her family, who stated that she had been so much charmed by Signor ——'s performance on the previous evening, that she was resolved to place herself in his way, and to let him see that she was spell-bound by his powers of fascination. Well aware, however, of the impropriety of addressing him, and tortured by disappointment at the fact of his not speaking to her, when so favourable an opportunity presented itself, she suddenly conceived the idea of leaping into the water, and thus risking her life, in order that, at least, she might become an object of interest in his eyes! "Truth is strange, stranger than fiction."

"Who *could* the singer be?" exclaim the young ladies who may chance to read this narrative, and who may themselves have experienced a similar passion to that which was betrayed on this remarkable occasion. "Who could it be, I wonder? Was it Mario, or Giuglini, or Gardoni, or——?"

Imagine it to have been all three, and many more, if you please, and there will be no monopoly of your approving rewards.

CHAPTER XI.

William Makepeace Thackeray—Letters from Thackeray—His Readiness to Serve a Friend in Need—M. Aretz, the Tailor, and the Paris Sketch-book—Thackeray's Views of Literary Men—The Four Georges — Amanuensis to Thackeray—The Great Author at Work—His Talk during his Leisure Moments—His Second Mission to the United States.

WERE I treating of the memoirs of a single individual, I should naturally feel myself bound to relate every event in his career in chronological order, according to the plan so successfully pursued by Mr. Frederick Lawrence, for example, in his "Life of Henry Fielding;" but as the purpose of this work is simply to describe, almost at random, certain noteworthy occurrences in the every-day lives of many who have become famous in the world's history, and who have enabled me to forge, as it were, a small link in the great literary chain, I must repeat my claim to indulgence, if, with a view to aiding the efforts of more able biographers, I jot down facts and circumstances which are exclusively within my own keep-

ing, and which could not be made common property without my knowledge and consent.

In approaching the name of William Makepeace Thackeray I feel a degree of delicacy and even timidity which his absence from the scene of his world-wide renown does not tend to diminish; for Thackeray was a man of such large mental proportions, and such far-seeing power in his mode of anatomizing and criticising human character, that one seems to be treading on volcanic ground in venturing to deal with him at all. But of what is biography composed? Assuredly not of the knowledge and experience of one privileged person, but of the aggregate contributions of many, who are willing, when occasion offers, to state what they know for the information and benefit of posterity. A hundred admirers of Thackeray might undertake to write a memoir of him, and yet the task of doing full justice to his character and career must necessarily be left to a chosen future historian, who shall zealously gather together all the bits and fragments to be found scattered among books and men, and blend them into a substantial and permanent shape. But it must be admitted that there is an exceptional difficulty in regard to Thackeray, inasmuch as there were few whom he

allowed to *know* him, in the true sense of the phrase—that is to say, there was a constitutional reserve in his manner, accompanied, at times, by a cold austerity which led to some misgivings as to the possibility of his being the pleasant social companion his intimates often described him to be. And yet it is well known to those who saw much of Thackeray in his familiar moments, that he could be essentially "jolly" (a favourite term of his) when the humour suited him, and that he would on such occasions open his heart as freely as if the word "reticence" formed no part of his vocabulary; whereas at other times he would keep himself entirely within himself, and answer a question by a monosyllable, or peradventure by a significant movement of the head. At one moment he would look you full in the face and greet you jauntily, at another he would turn from you with a peculiar waving of the hand which of course indicated that he had no desire to talk. Men who were members of the same club with him have been heard to say that sometimes he would pass them in the lobbies unnoticed, and at others he would cheerfully initiate a conversation, and leave behind him an impression that sullenness or *hauteur* was wholly foreign to his nature. It should be stated, however, that his

health for many years had never been entirely unimpaired, and that his acute sensibility often rendered it irksome to him to come in contact with his fellow men. In short, he was essentially of a nervous temperament, and altogether deficient in that vigorous self-possession which enables a man to shine in public assemblies, for it was absolute pain to him to be called upon to make a speech, and even in ordinary conversation he showed no particular desire to hold a prominent place. But the above considerations apart, it would be easier to know many men in a few days than it would be thoroughly to understand Thackeray in the same number of years; for *semper idem* was not his motto, and his genius was—as it undoubtedly had a perfect right to be—wayward and capricious. Douglas Jerrold, dating his acquaintance with Thackeray from the time that the latter, by some curious hazard, illustrated his book of "Men of Character," was often heard to say, "I have known Thackeray eighteen years, and don't know him yet." But that the great novelist and satirist had a generous and sympathetic heart, can hardly, I think, be disputed; and even the few brief letters which I received from him are sufficient to prove that, however austere he sometimes appeared to be ex-

ternally, he was very rarely wanting in that readiness to perform a kind office, which was one of the leading characteristics of his nature.

On one occasion I had been induced by an intimate friend, for some special object of business, to solicit a book from him which he had recently published; and his answer was as follows:—

"My dear Sir,—Not one book of mine, except single copies of 'V. Fair,' and 'Pendennis,' and 'Esmond,' do I possess, and one of the Xmas books, which is not mine, but my daughter's. The other books are out of print, and I don't know where procurable, so that I can't comply with a wish which I should very gladly accede to.

"Your book* has been lying *perdu* ever so long at the Athenæum; and then I got it, and lost it again, and I kept your address on my looking-glass; and in removing from Kton. to Brompton the address fell out, and now I must ask Horace Mayhew to forward book and note."

Some time after this I received a curious confirmation of Mr. Thackeray's statement that he did not

* Alluding to a book—Hazlitt's "Round Table," if my memory serves me correctly—which I had lent him some few months previously.

possess copies of his own books. At the period now referred to he had completed "The Newcomes," and on looking at the bookshelves in his studio one morning I observed that a newly bound copy of that novel was the only one of his works in the library. "Vanity Fair," and "Pendennis," and "Esmond," were not to be seen. On Mr. Thackeray entering the room, I alluded to this unexpected absence of his books, and added that I had particularly noticed that Mr. Charles Dickens possessed all his own works, neatly bound, and ranged in the order in which they were successively published. "Yes," said Thackeray, "I know Dickens does, and so ought I; but fellows borrow them or steal them, and I try to keep them, and can't."

At another period of my intercourse with Mr. Thackeray I had been reading his "Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo," and having always been an enthusiastic admirer of his writings, long before I knew that the "Michael Angelo Titmarsh," of "Fraser's Magazine," was identical with W. M. Thackeray, I could not refrain from expressing to him by letter the delight I had drawn from his Egyptian pages. Amongst other things, I remember being deeply impressed by the graphic power displayed in

the poem of "The White Squall," and by the charming burst of parental feeling with which it concludes.*

Mr. Thackeray's answer was as follows:—

"Dear Hodder,—I thank you very much for your note, and am very glad that my little book has given you pleasure. I hope that the future works of the same author will please you, and indeed am quite anxious to have as many people as may be of your opinion. It is not my intention to return to Constantinople at present, and when there I hope I shall be more moral than in former days, and have no desire to fling the handkerchief to any members whatsoever of his Highness's seraglio.

"Yours truly,

"W. M. Thackeray."

I cannot at this distant date precisely call to mind the circumstances under which I continued at inter-

* "And when, its force expended,
The harmless storm was ended,
And as the sunrise splendid
Came blushing o'er the sea;
I thought as day was breaking,
My little girls were waking,
And smiling, and making
A prayer at home for me."

vals to meet Mr. Thackeray, but the various letters I received from him contain the most gratifying proof that he was always well affected towards writers who could not possibly aspire to his own rank in the literary army; and the following extract is one of the best evidences of this fact I can adduce, because at the time he wrote it my knowledge of him did not extend beyond that which was derived from a few brief conversations with him at the chambers of a friend, upon matters in no way relating to business, such as afterwards brought me more closely in contact with him.

The letter refers to a loss which had just befallen me in consequence of some changes which had taken place in a newspaper establishment with which I was then connected. It is dated May 19, 1855, and says—

"I am sincerely sorry to hear of your position, and send the little contribution which came so opportunely from another friend whom I was enabled once to help. When you are well to do again I know you will pay it back, and I dare say somebody else will want the money, which is meanwhile most heartily at your service."

It was afterwards explained to me that Mr.

Thackeray made a practice of acting upon the principle embodied in the above note. Like many other generous men he had always a few pounds floating about amongst friends and acquaintances whom he had been able to oblige in their necessity, and whenever he received back money which he had lent, he did not put it into his pocket with a glow of satisfaction at having added so much to his exchequer; but congratulated himself that he could transfer the same sum to another person who he knew was in need of it.

Had Thackeray himself received such a letter as the above under circumstances similar to those which prompted it, we may imagine with what characteristic humour he would have expressed his feelings in a few of those glowing sentences which shine like "gems of purest ray serene" through the greater part of his writings? Witness his dedication of "The Paris Sketch Book" to his tailor, M. Aretz:—

"Sir—It becomes every man in his station to acknowledge and praise virtue wheresoever he may find it, and to point it out for the admiration and example of his fellow-men.

"Some months since, when you presented to the writer of these pages a small account for coats and

pantaloons manufactured by you, and when you were met by a statement from your creditor that an immediate settlement of your bill would be extremely inconvenient to him, your reply was, 'Mon Dieu, Sir, let not that annoy you; if you want money, as a gentleman often does in a strange country, I have a thousand-franc note at my house which is quite at your service.'

"History or experience, Sir, makes us acquainted with so few actions that can be compared to yours—an offer like this from a stranger and a tailor seems to me so astonishing—that you must pardon me for thus making your virtue public, and acquainting the English nation with your merit and your name. Let me add, Sir, that you live on the first-floor; that your clothes and fit are excellent; and your charges moderate and just; and as a humble tribute of my admiration, permit me to lay these volumes at your feet.

"Your obliged, faithful servant,

"M. A. Titmarsh."

It may be fairly assumed that in using the words "a stranger *and a tailor*," and in slyly alluding to the fact that he "lived on the first floor, and that his clothes and fit were excellent and his charges moderate and just," Thackeray was indulging in a little vein of polite satire which slightly detracted

from the gratitude expressed; but there can be little doubt as to the honesty of heart which was at the basis of that characteristic epistle? Throughout the manifold works of Thackeray it would be difficult to find a passage more completely belonging to the man—and to him alone—than the graphic sentences in this dedicatory letter.

Having indirectly alluded to Mr. Thackeray's financial condition at the period referred to in the above, I may inform the reader, in the words of a biographer, that the offer of the thousand-franc note was gladly accepted and the money duly repaid. This latter part of the transaction Mr. Thackeray forbears to mention, but his biographers are not bound by the same spirit of reticence; and as he did strict justice to the confiding lender, it is only fair that similar justice should be meted to the candid borrower. He accepted the money, and—repaid it. Think of this, ye generous hearts, who are prone to regard the man of letters at his worst, and to charge him with every vice not evidenced against himself in his works—who delight to moralize upon the peccadilloes of others because Fortune has enabled them to disguise their own—who are in-

fluenced, in their love of detraction, by a morbid desire to make the world believe that they know more of the author than of his books, and who glory in any opportunity which some vulgar rumour may afford them of sneering at "those literary men"—think of the astounding fact that an insignificant writer of the 19th century actually returned a sum of money which he had borrowed! But it may be argued, from the language used by Mr. Thackeray at the close of his lectures on "The English Humorists of the 18th Century," denying that his profession was neglected in this country, and that authors were ill-received and held in slight esteem*—that he formed an exception to the great majority of his literary brethren. Surely this would be a most illiberal view to take of the question; for History records the lives of many eminent writers who, whatever may have been

* "It would hardly be grateful," he goes on to say, "to alter my old opinion, that we do meet with goodwill and kindness, with generous and helping hands in the time of our necessity, with cordial and friendly recognition. What claim had one of these of whom I have been speaking but genius? What return of gratitude, fame, affection, did it not bring to all? What punishment befel those who were unfortunate among them, but that which follows reckless habits and careless lives? For these faults a wit must suffer like the dullest prodigal that ever ran in debt. He

the virtues of Mr. Thackeray, will bear favourable comparison with him in all the domestic relations of life—whether it be in the regulation of their pecuniary resources, in the discharge of the duties of a husband or a father, or in the exercise of those social amenities which cause man to be known to his fellow-man. "But men of genius," says Isaac Disraeli, "have often been accused of imaginary crimes. Their very eminence attracts the lie of calumny, which tradition often conveys beyond the possibility of refutation." With such an authority as this to support us, aided by others equally powerful, let us endeavour to believe that the conduct of Mr. M. A. Titmarsh in respect to the Paris tailor was the rule rather than the exception.

To my great satisfaction I received one evening a note from Mr. Thackeray, which I had been expecting for several days, as he had promised

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must pay the tailor if he wears the coat; his children must go in rags if he spends his money at the tavern; he can't come to London and be made Lord Chancellor if he stops on the road, and gambles away his last shilling at Dublin. And he must pay the social penalty of these follies, too, and expect that the world will shun the man of bad habits; that women will avoid the man of loose life; that prudent folks will close their doors as a precaution, and before a demand should be made on their pockets by the needy prodigal."

to write to me on the subject; but, as the delay seemed ominous, I began to think he had changed his determination, and would not require my services as now suggested. In this note, which is dated Onslow Square, September 6, 1855, he says, after referring to other matters—

"I want a little work done in the way of arranging papers, copying at the B. M., &c.,—if you are free, and will come here on Tuesday morning next, I can employ your services, and put some money in your way."

To Onslow Square I accordingly went on the morning fixed upon, and found Mr. Thackeray in his study ready to receive me; but instead of entering upon business in that part of the house, he took me upstairs to his bedroom, where every arrangement had been made for the convenience of writing. I then learnt that he was busily occupied in preparing his lectures on the "Four Georges," and that he had need of an amanuensis to fill the place of one who was now otherwise occupied. In that capacity it was my task to write to his dictation, and to make extracts from books, according to his instructions, either at his own house or at the British Museum. This duty called me to his bedchamber every morning,

and as a general rule I found him up and ready to begin work, though he was sometimes in doubt and difficulty as to whether he should commence operations sitting or standing, or walking about, or lying down. Often he would light a cigar, and after pacing the room for a few minutes, would put the unsmoked remnant on the mantelpiece, and resume his work with increased cheerfulness, as if he had gathered fresh inspiration from the "gentle odours" of the "sublime tobacco." But it will hardly be considered necessary, or even politic, to trace in minute lines every little circumstance arising out of the daily occupation of a man who was performing a self-imposed task which he hoped would be agreeable to the world, and bring some reward to himself. Indeed, it would be presumption on my part to attempt to "Boswellize" Thackeray; and I should be sorry if I were inadvertently betrayed into any remark or disclosure which might possibly lead to such an imputation. But, acting on the poet's dictum, that "the world knows nothing of its greatest men,"* I am sure I shall not be greatly to blame if, in the fulfilment of a mission which accident has entrusted to me, I take a small share in

* Taylor's "Philip van Artevelde."

causing the world to know *something* of William Makepeace Thackeray beyond that which is revealed in his books.

It was not a little amusing to observe the frequency with which Mr. Thackeray, in the moments of dictation, would change his position, and I could not but think that he seemed most at his ease when one would suppose he was most uncomfortable. He was easy to "follow," as his enunciation was always clear and distinct, and he generally "weighed his words before he gave them breath," so that his amanuensis seldom received a check during the progress of his pen. He never became energetic, but spoke with that calm deliberation which distinguished his public readings; and there was one peculiarity which, amongst others, I especially remarked, viz., that when he made a humorous point, which inevitably caused me to laugh, his own countenance was unmoved, like that of the comedian Liston, who, as is well known, looked as if he wondered what had occurred to excite the risibility of his audience. Sometimes Thackeray would suddenly stop in his work to test the virtues of a pen or the quality of a particular kind of paper; and if he saw I did not write quite so fluently as he could wish, he would suggest a broader nib or a nar-

rower nib, as the case might be, and would then direct his attention to the paper I was using, and advise me to employ a peculiar specimen before me, with a rough, ribbed surface. He proposed it, he said, because it would "bite," and he did not like those smooth, satiny papers, as they allowed nothing for the pen to catch hold of, but let it glide along without a check when an occasional halt would seem desirable.

I refer to these trifles merely as showing that Mr. Thackeray was glad to resort to any little stratagem which might afford him a moment's relaxation from his work, when the words would not spring nimbly from the lips. May it not be some consolation to the humblest labourer in the same vineyard to know that even the brightest geniuses cannot always make their light to shine? Many authors have often declared that they could not write to dictation. Thackeray was one who *could*, and liked to do so; and no better proof need be afforded of his power in that respect than is to be found in his "Four Georges," which contain some of the most thoughtful and vigorous passages that ever emanated from his brain.

While I was thus daily engaged with Mr. Thackeray, he sometimes required my assistance on a Sunday afternoon, and I call to mind one Sunday in particular—I think it was the last before he started for America—when I found him in exceptionally high spirits, and much more inclined to talk than to write. He spoke of the journey he was about to commence, and of the money he should probably make by his readings in America.* He wanted a few thousands more, he said, for he had not yet made enough. True, he added, that he possessed a small share of the world's goods, and he was happy to think that he had paid off one moiety of the cost of his house (which he then occupied), and that he should be able before he left the country to discharge the remainder of the liability. He then went on to relate some of his literary experiences, and the circumstances under which his fortunes had improved during the last few years, observing that lecturing was certainly more profitable than magazine writing. He next alluded to his friends the contributors to *Punch*, and passed in review many of their virtues and

* It will be borne in mind that he had already achieved distinction in that country as a public lecturer on the "English Humorists of the 18th Century."

idiosyncrasies; and was at some pains to show that he held the humorous brotherhood in high esteem.

In speaking of periodical literature, he said he contemplated producing a magazine or journal in his own name after his return from America; and upon my venturing to observe that I hoped he did not intend to encourage the anonymous system in regard to his contributors, as the conductors of other publications of the day seemed resolved to do, he replied "No. I think that's hard lines."* Our conversation next turned upon his mission to the United States, and when he hinted at the probability of his taking a secretary with him, as he had done on his former visit to that country, I suggested that I should be delighted to fill that office if he had not already selected some one. He promised to consider my suggestion, and let me know what determination he had arrived at; but in the meantime he feared he should require a valet more than a secretary. On the following morning he said he had turned the matter over in his mind, and had come to the conclusion that, in consequence of the state of his

* On his return to England, the "Cornhill Magazine" was started under the editorship of Mr. Thackeray.

health, he should be obliged to take a servant with him instead of a secretary; adding, dryly, "I can ask a servant to hold a basin to me; but I doubt if I could so treat a secretary—at least, he *might* object." He smiled as he made this droll observation, but I too well knew that it was a true word spoken in jest; for he was subject to periodical illnesses which rendered the services of a valet most essential to him; and the young man who filled that situation at the time was fortunately one in whom he placed implicit confidence; and he was thankful for the gentle way in which his servant tended him.

CHAPTER XII.

Dinner to Thackeray—The Speech he wrote for the Occasion—Macbeth and Forres Castle, Dr. Birch and Rodwell Regis—Baron Marochetti's Child—Thackeray on the Morning of his Departure for America — His Return from that Country — Arrangements for his Lectures on "The Four Georges"—A Tour with Thackeray in the Provinces—*Where* he could write, and in what manner he wrote!—His Mistrust of his own Powers.

IT was but natural to suppose that, considering Mr. Thackeray's popularity amongst his friends, and the interest which attached to the object of his visit to America, a desire would be shown to invite him to a farewell dinner. The project being initiated, Mr. Peter Cunningham undertook the duties of secretary, and all the preliminary arrangements were of the most satisfactory kind, care being taken that the party should be entirely private, and that it should consist exclusively of Mr. Thackeray's intimates.

On the morning of the banquet he was in a state of great nervous anxiety, saying that it was very kind of his friends to give him a dinner, but that he wished it was over, for such things al-

ways set him trembling. "Besides," he exclaimed, "I have to make a speech, and what am I to say? Here, take a pen in your hand and sit down; and I'll see if I can hammer out something. It's hammering now; I'm afraid it will be *stammering* by-and-by." I did as he requested, and he dictated with much ease and fluency a speech—or rather the heads of a speech—which he proposed delivering in response to the inevitable toast of his own health.

This was on a morning in the first week of October, 1855, and the dinner took place at the London Tavern in the evening of the same day, the duties of chairman being delegated to Mr. Charles Dickens, who from the very beginning of his public career had always manifested a remarkable aptitude for that responsible office.

The following account of the affair was afterwards published by a gentleman who was present on the occasion:—

"The Thackeray dinner was a triumph. Covers, we are assured, were laid for sixty; and sixty and no more sat down precisely at the minute named to do honour to the great novelist. Sixty very hearty shakes of the hand did Thackeray receive from sixty friends on that occasion; and hearty cheers from sixty vociferous and friendly tongues followed the chairman's—Mr. Charles Dickens—proposal of his health,

and of wishes for his speedy and successful return among us. Dickens—the best after-dinner speaker now alive—was never happier. He spoke as if he was fully conscious that it was a great occasion, and that the absence of even one reporter was a matter of congratulation, affording ampler room to unbend. The table was in the shape of a horseshoe, having two vice-chairmen, and this circumstance was wrought up and played with by Dickens in the true Sam Weller and Charles Dickens manner. Thackeray, who is far from what is called a good speaker, outdid himself. There was his usual hesitation; but this hesitation becomes his manner of speaking and his matter, and is never unpleasant to his hearers, though it is, we are assured, most irksome to himself. This speech was full of pathos and humour, and oddity, with bits of prepared parts imperfectly recollected, but most happily made good by the felicities of the passing moment. Like the 'Last Minstrel,'

> 'Each blank in faithless memory's void
> The poet's glowing thought supplied.'

It was a speech to remember for its earnestness of purpose and its undoubted originality. Then the Chairman quitted, and many near and at a distance quitted with him. Thackeray was on the move with the Chairman, when, inspired by the moment, Jerrold took the chair, and Thackeray remained. Who is to chronicle what now passed?—what passages of wit—what neat and pleasant sarcastic speeches in proposing

healths—what varied and pleasant, ay, and at times, sarcastic acknowledgments? Up to the time when Dickens left, a good reporter might have given all, and with ease, to future ages: but there could be no reporting what followed. There were words too nimble and too full of flame for a dozen Gurneys, all ears, to catch and preserve. Few will forget that night. There was an 'air of wit' about the room for three days after. Enough to make the two companies, though downright fools, right witty."

I am now fortunately enabled to give the original draft of the speech thus pictured, and which, as I have just stated, was written by me to Mr. Thackeray's dictation on the morning of the dinner. It will be seen, from the occasional vacant spaces, that the writer of the above was correct in assuming that the speaker had intentionally left blanks with the view of supplying them at the moment. Some few sentences will be found to be quite incomplete; but it is not very difficult to conjecture how Mr. Thackeray would fill them up: though I believe I am right in saying that the speech as delivered fell far short of the speech as written. The latter has never been out of my possession since it came from Mr. Thackeray's lips, for having once tested his power and brought to light the thoughts which animated

him, he did not care for the MS., and did not even read it. I subjoin it, *ipsissima verba.*

"I know great numbers of us here present have been invited to a neighbouring palace where turtle, champagne, and all good things are as plentiful almost as here, and where there reigns a civic monarch with a splendid court of officers, &c.——The sort of greeting that I had myself to-day—this splendour, &c.—the bevy in the ante-room—have filled my bosom with an elation with which no doubt Sir Francis Graham Moon's throbs.* I am surrounded by respectful friends, &c.—and I feel myself like a Lord Mayor. To his lordship's delight and magnificence there is a drawback. In the fountain of *his* pleasure there surges a bitter. He is thinking about the 9th of November, and I about the 13th of October.†

"Some years since, when I was younger and used to frequent jolly assemblies, I wrote a Bacchanalian song, to be chanted after dinner, &c.—I wish some one would sing that song now to the tune of the 'Dead March in Saul,' &c.—not for me—I am miserable enough; but for you, who seem in a great deal too good spirits. I tell you I am not—all the drink in Mr. Bathe's ‡ cellar wont make me. There may be sherry there 500 years old—Columbus may have taken

* Sir F. G. Moon, Bart., was at that time Lord Mayor of London.

† The day on which he was to start for America.

‡ The then proprietor of the London Tavern.

it out from Cadiz with him when he went to discover America, and it wont make me jolly, &c.,—and yet, entirely unsatisfactory as this feast is to me, I should like some more. Why can't you give me some more? I don't care about them costing two guineas a head. It is not the turtle I value. Let us go to Simpson's fish ordinary—or to Bertolini's, or John o' Groat's, &c.—I don't want to go away—I cling round the mahogany tree.

"In the course of my profound and extensive reading I have found it is the habit of the English nation to give dinners to the unfortunate. I have been living lately with some worthy singular fellows 150 or 160 years old. I find that upon certain occasions the greatest attention was always paid them. They might call for anything they liked for dinner. My friend Simon Frazer, Lord Lovat, about 109 years since, I think, partook very cheerfully of minced veal and sack before he was going on his journey*—Lord Ferrers (Rice)†—I could tell you a dozen jolly stories about feasts of this sort. I remember a particularly jolly one at which I was present, and which took place

* He was beheaded in the year 1747 for fighting in the cause of the Pretender in the Scottish rebellion of 1745.

† Executed at Tyburn in the year 1760 for the murder of one Johnson, the receiver of his estates. His lordship was allowed to ride from the Tower to the scaffold in his own landau, and appeared gaily dressed in a light-coloured suit of clothes, embroidered with silver. It was doubtless to this circumstance that Mr. Thackeray intended to allude in filling up the vacuum.

at least 900 years ago. My friend Mr. Macready gave it at Forres Castle, North Britain, Covent Garden. That was a magnificent affair indeed. The tables were piled with most splendid fruits—gorgeous dish-covers glittered in endless perspective—Macbeth, —Macready, I mean—taking up a huge gold beaker, shining with enormous gems that must have been worth many hundred millions of money, filled it out of a gold six-gallon jug, and drank courteously to the general health of the whole table. Why did he put it down? What made him, in the midst of that jolly party, appear so haggard and melancholy? It was because he saw before him the ghost of John Cooper, with chalked face and an immense streak of vermilion painted across his throat! No wonder he was disturbed. In like manner I have before me at this minute the horrid figure of a steward, with a basin perhaps, or a glass of brandy and water, which he will press me to drink, and which I shall try and swallow, and which wont make me any better—I know it wont.

"Then there's the dinner, which we all of us must remember in our schoolboy days, and which took place twice or thrice a year at home, on the day before Dr. Birch expected his young friends to re-assemble at his academy, Rodwell Regis. Don't you remember how the morning was spent? How you went about taking leave of the garden, and the old mare and foal, and the paddock, and the pointers in the kennel; and how your little sister wistfully kept at your side all day;

and how you went and looked at that confounded trunk which old Martha was packing with the new shirts, and at that heavy cake packed up in the play-box; and how kind 'the governor' was all day; and how at dinner he said 'Jack—or Tom—pass the bottle' in a very cheery voice; and how your mother had got the dishes she knew you liked best; and how you had the wing instead of the leg, which used to be your ordinary share; and how that dear, delightful, hot, raspberry rolly-polly pudding, good as it was, and fondly beloved by you, yet somehow had the effect of the notorious school stick-jaw, and choked you and stuck in your throat; and how the gig came; and then, how you heard the whirl of mail-coach wheels, and the tooting of the guard's horn, as with an odious punctuality the mail and the four horses came galloping over the hill.—Shake hands, good-bye! God bless everybody! Don't cry, sister.—Away we go! and to-morrow we begin with Dr. Birch, and six months at Rodwell Regis!

"But after six months came the holidays again!* &c. &c. &c."

There is small chance of it being denied that the above is as fully characteristic of Mr. Thackeray's peculiar style as any passage to be found in his works.

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* Mr. Thackeray was to be absent from England for that space of time

Not a doubt or question could possibly be raised in regard to its authorship ; for there spoke Thackeray in his own original way—heart, lips, tone, and language.

That Mr. Thackeray was sometimes given to the "melting mood" may be shown by a little incident, in the relation of which I trust I shall violate no confidence, or throw myself open to the charge of ascribing to the great author a larger share of the milk of human kindness than often falls to the lot of ordinary mortals.

One morning I was making my way to 36, Onslow Square, at an earlier hour than usual, when, to my great surprise, I met Mr. Thackeray pacing up and down the footway in a state of great mental uneasiness. It was so entirely contrary to his custom—at least as far as my experience told me—to leave his house at so early an hour, and I was so much concerned at seeing him in such depression, that I was naturally induced to say that I hoped nothing very serious had happened to his household. He answered, "Poor Marochetti's child is dying." Having said this, tears came to his relief, and he speedily returned home. He was on terms of close friendship with the Baron Marochetti (his next-door neighbour), and he sympathized with that well-known

sculptor in the deep love he bore for his dying child. He was in a cheerless mood for the remainder of the day, and in the course of his work reverted many times to the calamity which he so much deplored.*

Again, on the morning of his departure for America. —He was to start by an early train, and when I arrived (for it had been previously arranged that I should see him before he left) I found him in his study, and his two daughters in the dining-room—all in a very tearful condition; and I do not think I am far wrong in saying that if ever man's strength was overpowered by woman's weakness it was so upon this occasion, for Mr. Thackeray could not look at his daughters without betraying a moisture in his eyes, which he in vain strove to conceal. Nevertheless he was enabled to attend to several money transactions which it was necessary he should arrange before leaving; and to give me certain instructions about the four volumes of his "Miscellanies" then in course of publication, and which he begged me to watch in their passage through the press, with a view to a few foot-notes that might be thought desirable. Then came the hour for

* It will be recollected that the tablet to Thackeray's memory in Westminster Abbey was the design and workmanship of the late Baron Marochetti.

parting! A cab was at the door, the luggage had all been properly disposed of, and the servants stood in the hall, to notify, by their looks, how much they regretted their master's departure. "This is the moment I have dreaded!" said Thackeray, as he entered the dining-room to embrace his daughters; and when he hastily descended the steps of the door he *knew** that they would be at the window to

"Cast one longing, lingering look behind."

"Good-by," he murmured, in a suppressed voice, as I followed him to the cab; "keep close behind me, and let me try to jump in unseen."

The instant the door of the vehicle was closed upon him, he threw himself back into a corner and buried his face in his hands. That was the last I saw of Mr. Thackeray before he left London on his second visit to the United States; and I think I have given sufficient proof that, great as was his power of poising

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* "And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reapers sung."

Campbell—"The Soldier's Dream."

The idea thus expressed—that a man in the fulness of his heart may *know* that which he would fain see or hear, but is denied the power of doing either, has often been taken as a charming illustration of the influence which the Ideal may exercise over the Real.

the shafts of ridicule at the follies and vices of the day, and coldly reserved as he sometimes was in his demeanour, he was full of that gentleness of heart to which his writings constantly bear testimony, and it was his instinct to be actuated by the kindliest impulses which do honour to our common nature.

On Mr. Thackeray's return from a successful tour in the United States, he sought to make arrangements for the reading of his lectures on "The Four Georges" in London and the provinces. He had fulfilled his purpose of delivering them in America in the first instance, and he had now no reason to think that they would not be listened to with satisfaction in his own country. To undertake the responsibility of organizing any plan of proceeding, of appointing agents, of superintending the publication of advertisements, and settling the various other preliminary matters incidental to what is technically called a "lecturing tour," was, of course, more than could possibly be expected from a man of Mr. Thackeray's intellectual calibre. It soon therefore became known that he was "in the market," as it were, ready to accept engagements for the reading of his lectures; and Mr. Frederick Beale, of the musical firm which has already found mention in this book, expressed his desire to

Mr. Thackeray, through me, to make the speculation his own, and to "farm" the lecturer at a given sum for each reading. Mr. Thackeray appeared pleased at the proposition, and a morning was appointed for Mr. Beale to accompany me to his house, with a view to my introducing him to the celebrated writer, and witnessing the arrangement of the terms.

Mr. Thackeray was in his dressing-gown and slippers, and received us in his bedroom, where, as I have already stated, he generally passed his mornings and wrote his books. His study being a small back room behind the dining-room on the ground floor, and being exposed to the noises from the street, he had caused his writing-table and appliances to be carried upstairs to the second floor, where two rooms had been thrown into one—the back to be used as a sleeping chamber, and the front, which was considerably larger than the other, as a sitting-room. The dimensions of this apartment being capacious, Mr. Thackeray was enabled to move about in the intervals of writing, and to extend his limbs on a couch, and in fine to change his attitude as often as his convenience demanded, for the operation of dictating necessarily spared him the pain of confining himself to a sitting posture. On the

morning in question some domestic annoyance had ruffled the serenity of his mind, and it was evident, from the abruptness of his manner, that he had no idea of being other than thoroughly "businesslike" in the negotiations we were about to commence. After a little preparatory interchange of civilities (which it was pretty evident Mr. Thackeray would have described as a "bore" had it been possible to ascertain his candid opinion at the moment), Mr. Beale, in his usual courteous manner, suggested the terms himself, and Mr. Thackeray, like a true diplomatist as he was, never allowed it to be supposed that he thought them more than reasonably remunerative.

The payment proposed was fifty guineas for each reading, and Mr. Thackeray was to appear a certain number of times in London—at the Surrey Music Hall, for instance—and to undertake a tour of three weeks in the provinces. No written agreement was prepared at this interview; but Mr. Beale undertook to have one drawn up and submitted to Mr. Thackeray at their next meeting. Meanwhile we took our departure from Onslow Square, leaving the author of "The Four Georges" evidently in a more contented frame of mind than he betrayed when we entered his room.

I had particularly noticed during the conversation between the two negotiators that sometimes the sum of fifty *guineas* was mentioned, and at others the amount dwindled to *pounds;* but having played the only part that was assigned to me—viz., that of personal introducer, I was reluctant to interfere, and therefore I said nothing until Mr. Beale and I were outside the house. I then observed to him that there was a want of proper understanding as to the precise nature of the terms, the words "guineas" and "pounds" having been indiscriminately used between them. It would therefore be advisable, I said, that we should immediately return to Mr. Thackeray, and, for fear of future disagreement, have the matter clearly defined. The question was simply and briefly put, and Mr. Thackeray's mode of answering it was impressive in its rugged significance. "Oh, guineas," he said; "decidedly *guineas.*" Mr. Beale said not a word, and the bargain was complete as determined by Mr. Thackeray. This was singularly characteristic of the man; for it is well known that in all his doings he took especial care never to undervalue his own powers, as more than one publishing firm of the present day can amply testify. "Always ask enough," he said; "they can but drop you down a

bit if they don't like it." That he was well satisfied with his arrangement with Mr. Beale is best proved by the fact that, when he saw me on the following day, he exclaimed, "What terms! fifty guineas a night! Why, I shouldn't have received one half that sum for an article in 'Fraser' a few years ago."

"I have no doubt," said I, "that the speculation will pay sufficiently well to leave a margin of profit for Mr. Beale."

"I hope so," Mr. Thackeray replied. "At least we must do our best—Beale with his advertisements and I with my work."

My connexion with the establishment of Messrs. Cramer and Beale led to its being suggested that I should accompany Mr. Thackeray on his tour as manager and secretary—a proposition to which I naturally had great pleasure in acceding, for I had learnt to understand and appreciate the peculiar temperament of the great Titmarsh—as many of his friends continued to call him—and had reason to believe he would not be dissatisfied with the arrangement The journey was planned out, and was to occupy three weeks: the principal places to be visited being Exeter, Plymouth, Bristol (Clifton), Birmingham, Oxford, Leamington, Norwich. It should here be stated that

out of the fifty guineas per day Mr. Thackeray was to defray his own expenses—so that the prospect of ultimate gain was somewhat less brilliant than it had first appeared to be; for Thackeray was not amongst those who could be said to pay the strictest regard to the social economies. He knew that money was in his brains, how quickly soever it might flow from his pockets; and it did not appear to be a matter of primary importance to him whether he saved much or little out of the enterprise.

As I was travelling entirely in an official character, and was not responsible to Mr. Thackeray, I studiously avoided forcing myself on his company, but always took especial care to select a carriage he did *not* occupy, and to plant myself in an hotel he did *not* patronize. Hence—if I may speak paradoxically—we pulled remarkably well together; and although the arrangements for a public reading every evening at 8 o'clock left little opportunity for social enjoyment—that is to say, at a time when it would be most in accordance with his usual habit—Mr. Thackeray occasionally invited me to dine with him. "This is a nice room," he would say, if the apartment allotted to him chanced to have a rural aspect, with trees and flowers bobbing in at the window; "I

could *write* here!" And where was it, it may be asked, that he could *not* write? for the twenty-two handsome volumes of his works lately issued bear sufficient presumptive evidence that his labour was done in various places and climes. May it not be fairly supposed that Titmarsh's "Carmen Lilliense," dated Lille, Sept. 2, 1843, and published in "Fraser's Magazine," was written on the identical spot where he was visited by the sad pecuniary misfortune which he so humorously deplores in the *refrain* of the ballad?—

> "My heart is weary, my peace is gone:
> How shall I e'er my woes reveal?
> I have no money; I lie in pawn,
> A stranger in the town of Lille."

That Mr. Thackeray should have produced so varied a collection of novels, essays, lectures, travels, poems, &c., in the course of a career brief as compared with those of other distinguished writers, may be taken as a fair proof that he could not, at all times, have been very particular as to *where* he sat down to convey to the world the treasures of his mind. But it is vain to pursue this theme further; and I have only brought it forward with a view to show that at the time I am now speaking of there was reason to believe that the art of writing—that is

to say, the mere manual exercise of the art—had become somewhat irksome to him; for he had been often heard to complain, when engaged on one of his monthly serials, that he was behindhand with his "copy," and that he hardly knew where or when to set about it. That some of his best things appeared in his later days is beyond question; but from the time he was about to commence "The Virginians"—when he used to exclaim in a tone almost amounting to querulousness, "They have asked me to do another book; but I don't know what to write about; I have said all I had to say"—it could not be stated with any degree of accuracy that he wrote *currente calamo*. Indeed, he was apt to undervalue his own ability, and to indulge the belief that what he was doing might be done by others better than himself. But the underlying generosity of his nature was, in some degree, the cause of this self-doubting, for he was at all times ready to give the warmest praise to contemporary writers; and as I have been tempted into this digression, I must claim the privilege of relating in the next chapter a few instances, within my own experience, of Thackeray's comparing himself with others to his own disadvantage.

CHAPTER XIII.

Charles Dickens and "Dombey and Son"—The Dinner of the General Theatrical Fund—Thackeray as Chairman—Charles Dickens as a Public Speaker—The "Cornhill Magazine" and the "Hogarth Papers"—Autograph Seekers—Albert Smith and Thackeray in a Lady's Album—An Audience of Students at Oxford—Contrast between Oxford and Leamington regarding the Effect of the Lectures—A little Dinner at the Phœnix Hotel.

AT the time of the publication of "Vanity Fair," Thackeray's great contemporary, Charles Dickens (for in spite of all remonstrance it has always been the fashion to place the two writers in the same category, and often to sacrifice one at the shrine of the other, according to the particular taste of the person addressing himself to the subject), was producing, in the accustomed monthly form—the green cover in the one instance, against the yellow cover in the other—his story of "Dombey and Son;" and it was Thackeray's delight to read each number with eagerness as it issued from the press. He had often been heard to speak of the work in terms of the highest praise. When it had reached its fifth number,

wherein Mr. Charles Dickens described the end of little Paul with a depth of pathos which produced a vibratory emotion in the hearts of all who read it, Mr. Thackeray seemed electrified at the thought that there was one man living who could exercise so complete a control over him. Putting No. 5 of "Dombey and Son" in his pocket, he hastened down to Mr. Punch's printing-office, and entering the editor's room, where I chanced to be the only person present except Mr. Mark Lemon himself, he dashed it on to the table with startling vehemence, and exclaimed, "There's no writing against such power as this—one has no chance! Read that chapter describing young Paul's death: it is unsurpassed—it is stupendous!" Mr. Lemon could give no opinion on the subject, for the current number of the story having only just made its appearance, he had not yet read it; but I believe that when he next saw the author of "Vanity Fair" he cordially subscribed to the doctrine which the latter had so energetically laid down.

Long after this, and during the period that I acted as his amanuensis, I went into his chamber one morning, as usual, and found him in bed (for, lest it should be supposed that Mr. Thackeray was what is com-

monly called a late riser, I should state at once that my visits to him were somewhat early, that is to say, before nine o'clock), a little pot of tea and some dry toast on a table by his side. I therefore remained at a distance from him, but Mr. Thackeray called me forward, and I discovered that he had passed a very restless night. "I am sorry," said I, "that you do not seem very well this morning."—"*Well,*" he murmured—"no, I am not well. I have got to make that confounded speech to-night." I immediately recollected that he was to preside at the annual dinner of the General Theatrical Fund—an undertaking which I well knew was entirely repugnant to his taste and wishes. "Don't let that trouble you, Mr. Thackeray," said I; "you will be sure to be all right when the time comes."—"Nonsense!" he replied, "it wont come all right—I can't make a speech. Confound it! That fellow Jackson let me in for this! Why don't they get Dickens to take the chair? He *can* make a speech, and a good one. *I'm* of no use." I told him that I thoroughly appreciated his remark in regard to Mr. Dickens, but that at the same time he was giving little credit to those whose discernment had selected him as the chairman of the evening, and they could not very well ask Mr. Dickens, as he had

only a year or two since occupied that position at an anniversary dinner of the same institution. "They little think how nervous I am," said Thackeray; "and Dickens doesn't know the meaning of the word."

In confirmation of this remark I observed that I once asked Mr. Dickens if he ever felt nervous on public occasions when called upon to speak; and his instant reply was, "Not in the least. The first time I took the chair at a public dinner I felt just as much confidence as if I had done the same thing a hundred times before."*

The result of Mr. Thackeray's chairmanship on the evening in question may here be recorded, with all respect to his memory and with that desire to be strictly correct, which he himself would have been the first to encourage. True to his engagement he took the

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* Charles Dickens is as happy at intimate social gatherings as on great public occasions. A dinner was given to his eldest son on the occasion of his departure for China on a commercial mission. Blanchard Jerrold was in the chair, with Mr. Dickens on his left, and the guest of the evening on his right. The young gentleman became warmed with the wine; whereupon Dickens, in returning thanks for his own health, took the opportunity of observing that after such a generous dinner "a little transaction in tea" would do his son a world of good.

post assigned to him, and commenced his duties as if he had resolved to set difficulties at defiance, and to show that the task was *not* quite impossible with him; but, unhappily for his nervous and sensitive temperament, Mr. Charles Dickens, as the president of the institution, sat at his right hand, and when he came to the all-absorbing toast of the evening, the terrifying fact rushed across his mind that his great contemporary would witness all his shortcomings and his sad inferiority. He had prepared his speech, and he commenced with some learned allusions to the car of Thespis and the early history of the drama, when he suddenly collapsed, and brought his address to a close in a few common-place observations which could scarcely be called coherent. He too painfully felt the weakness of his position; and notwithstanding a particularly kind and complimentary speech in which Mr. Dickens proposed his health as chairman, he could not recover the *prestige* he believed he had lost, and he left the room in company with an old friend at as early a moment as he could consistently with the respect he owed to the company.

One other instance I may mention of the many which came within my own knowledge of Mr. Thackeray's distrust of his own powers and his desire to exalt

others at the expense of himself. I found him one morning in an unusually loquacious mood, and I had not been with him many minutes before he said he was not disposed to trouble himself with any work that day. He was more inclined to talk. Adverting, by a natural transition from the subject he had first touched upon, to the respective merits of various writers who were then daily before the world, he spoke of the great success of "Household Words," and of the ability displayed in its pages by some of its contributors. "There's one man," for instance, he emphatically exclaimed, "who is a very clever fellow, and that is Sala. That paper of his, 'The Key of the Street,' is one of the best things I ever read. I couldn't have written it. I wish I could."

I ventured to suggest that, although there could be no doubt that the article in question possessed great merit, and that it had been talked about in the literary world as amongst the most attractive features in the publication, he was scarcely doing justice to his own powers by the observation he had made. "No, no," he repeated, with increased earnestness, "I couldn't have written that article, and as I shall have a periodical of my own shortly, I shall hope for this man's co-operation." It need hardly be said that Thackeray

kept his word in this respect; for when the "Cornhill Magazine" was announced to make its appearance under his editorship, George Augustus Sala was one of the first on his list of contributors; and among the most prominent papers in the first number was the commencement of a series on the character and genius of Hogarth—which series has long since been republished in a collected form, and displays in a remarkable degree a graphic force of delineation, combined with evidences of painstaking research, such as can be met with in the writings of very few of Mr. Sala's competitors. The opinion expressed by Mr. Thackeray on the opening chapter of this work was eminently encouraging to the author, and he resolved to exercise all the ability he possessed to render the production worthy of himself and of a magazine conducted by so distinguished a *collaborateur*.

In regard to the routine of our daily engagements on the provincial tour (to which the reader will now return) there is little to relate, as each day's movements were as nearly as possible the same as those of the preceding—viz., to the public hall where the reading was to take place, at eight o'clock in the evening—Mr. Thackeray to give his lecture, and myself to superintend the arrangements for the audience, and to take charge of the

money. Mr. Thackeray fulfilled his mission with the most undeviating punctuality, and always made it a special point to see me at the conclusion of the lecture, when he invariably asked me, with some eagerness, what had been the amount of the receipts. As a rule, they were more than sufficient to pay the expenses, and to allow him his honorarium; and he was always greatly pleased to learn this, as it would be disappointing to him, he said, if Mr. Beale should lose by the speculation.

It was a common practice in the towns we visited for quidnuncs, ambitious dowagers, and aspiring damsels pertaining to the order of bluestockings, to pester Mr. Thackeray at the close of his lecture to insert his autograph in an album—a request with which he was not often willing to comply. On one occasion an album was placed before him by a young fellow, who thought to tempt him by calling attention to the fact that the signatures of several distinguished musicians, including that of one of our most celebrated tenors, were in the same book, and that therefore he would be in very good company. "What! amongst all these fiddlers!" exclaimed Thackeray, with pretended raillery. Having uttered the somewhat brusque phrase, he could not well do other-

wise than satisfy the desire expressed; but he would not be prevailed upon to write more than the simple signature—"W. M. Thackeray." On another occasion the possessor of an album was much more fortunate. It belonged to a young lady of my acquaintance, and I had pleaded her cause so warmly that Mr. Thackeray opened the book, and I pointed out to him the names of certain contributors with whom I thought he might not object to be thus associated. He assented, and took the book home to his hotel, in order that he might have time to scan its contents. Amongst these he soon discovered the subjoined lines :—

"Mont Blanc is the Monarch of Mountains—
They crown'd him long ago;
But who they got to put it on
Nobody seems to know.

"ALBERT SMITH."

Under these lines Mr. Thackeray speedily wrote the following :—

"A HUMBLE SUGGESTION.

"I know that Albert wrote in hurry:
To criticize I scarce presume;
But yet methinks that Lindley Murray,
Instead of 'who,' had written *whom.*

"W. M. THACKERAY."

I need scarcely say that the young lady felt she had

brought her album to a "very good market," and she could never afterwards believe that Mr. Thackeray was other than the most amiable of authors and the most considerate of men.

There was one little difficulty which presented itself in regard to the preliminary arrangements for these lectures, and that was caused by the stipulation which Mr. Thackeray insisted on being made, that a desk should be prepared for him in every town he was to visit, of sufficient height to enable a man of his stature to read from it without stooping. This unusual desideratum was apparently distasteful to some of the local agents, for either they forgot to secure the exceptional dimensions of the desk, or they imagined that the letter which conveyed the instruction conveyed at the same time a mistake; and hence it occasionally happened that a little measuring and carpentering was required before the lecture could be proceeded with. It cannot be said, however, that much inconvenience arose from this indispensable preliminary, for Mr. Thackeray was patient and tolerant, and the audience had no right or desire to know what was going on, provided it had not come to their time to *listen*.

Apropos of the reading-desk and the reader.

Whilst I was engaged with Mr. Thackeray in writing "The Four Georges" to his dictation, he was wont to ask me to constitute myself "the audience," in order that he might test the strength of his voice and the elocutionary tone of his delivery. He would then improvise a desk of the height he required at one end of the double-room, and place me at the extremity of the other; and in this manner he read out from the MS. before him, trying alternately three separate forms of handwriting—his own, the present writer's, and that of the amanuensis whom I had succeeded.

The result pleased him, for his voice proved clear and resonant, and his elocution unaffected and distinct. But the manner which he adopted in his own room was hardly such as could be entirely satisfactory to a public audience, and yet Mr. Thackeray made little or no alteration in his tone. The consequence was that many complained that he spoke in too familiar and colloquial a style—that his idea seemed to be that it was less his business to make himself heard than it was the duty of the audience to hear him. His tall, commanding figure, however, and the imposing gravity of his countenance, generally secured respectful silence; and, excepting on

occasions when he gave his reading in a building of unusual capaciousness, it was only the most remotely placed of his auditors to whom he was not sufficiently audible.

The circumstances attending his appearance in the public room at Oxford (it is impossible at this distant date to remember the precise name of every building in which he delivered a lecture), were such as to leave something to record beyond the mere fact that Mr. Thackeray had given his long-promised reading on one of "The Four Georges"—that the assembly was numerous and enthusiastic, and that the audience behaved with that perfect equanimity which was to be expected on an occasion presenting so little temptation to other than the most refined deportment. I had been cautioned by the local agent that considerable care and management would be required to prevent the students from committing a breach of the peace while securing their ingress to the room. He said that after paying their money in due form they would defy check-takers and barriers, and would assuredly "bonnet" any official who might chance to impede their progress. This was certainly rather alarming, but on conferring with Mr. Thackeray on the subject, we agreed upon a plan which it was thought would

avert the anticipated mischief. Instead of employing persons connected with the establishment to take the checks and guard the inner door, it was arranged that a gentleman representing the agent himself (a music-seller in the town) should occupy one position, and myself the other; and that, in the event of any insurrection occurring, I should state that I was Mr. Thackeray's particular friend, and that I implored them out of respect to him not to make a disturbance.

The moment the outer door was opened there came such an overwhelming rush of expectant youths in the wild excitement of student-life, that one might almost have supposed that the inmates of all the colleges had combined together to conduct a siege operation. The agreeable practical joke of "bonneting" was attempted in a mild form by one or two of the first-comers, but the earnest assurance I gave them that in assaulting me they would seriously offend Mr. Thackeray, and probably prevent him from doing justice to himself or to them, soon caused them to recollect that the conduct of gentlemen was naturally expected from them. The only symptoms of disorder which they afterwards exhibited arose from their extreme anxiety and impatience to hear the great man whose writings they heartily appreciated, and from

their resolve to give him that right royal welcome which might properly be expected from the surging life-blood of university students.

The lecture proceeded, and it was at once interesting to note that the young Oxonians had not confined their studies to the mere routine of the scholar's curriculum, but that they had learnt something of the illustrious modern writer whose works had assumed a classic significance. The manner in which they not only "took," but almost anticipated every flash of wit or humour as it came from the lips of the reader, gave him infinite satisfaction; and when the task was ended, he said to me in the ante-room, "There's an audience for you! Gad, I would lecture to those young fellows for nothing!" Indeed, so pleased was he with the enthusiasm they expressed, that he admitted many of them to a personal interview with him in his private room, and thanked them earnestly for the hearty encouragement they had given him. There was one young gentleman who endeavoured to show that he bore a relationship to some branch of Mr. Thackeray's family, but this claim to consanguinity the lecturer failed to recognise. "No matter,' he said, "we are all brothers, and the best of us can wish no more."

From Oxford it was part of our programme to proceed to Leamington, where, as an exception to the general rule laid down for our plan of operation, the reading was to take place at three o'clock in the afternoon—the people of that highly genteel town being far too respectable to attend public entertainments in the evening. Those who know Leamington need not be told that the most select of its inhabitants are punctilious old ladies, whose daily actions are regulated by the strictest rules of domestic law, and unapproachable young ladies who spend their afternoons in the archery grounds and their evenings at tambour work. It was not very likely, therefore, that a gentleman who had written in such scathing language of the ancestors of our Queen, as Mr. Thackeray was known to have done, would receive a greeting *quite* so cordial as that which the young collegians had given him on the previous night. The audience was scanty, the "reception" was cold and repelling, the applause was far from inspiriting, and—the reading in the town of Leamington did not pay. "How are the receipts?" inquired Mr. Thackeray. "Not enough to pay me my fifty guineas, I suppose?"—"Not by many pounds," was my answer. "I'm sorry for poor Beale," said Thackeray. "But did you ever see such

an audience? And after those splendid young lads at Oxford!"

This was on Saturday, and Mr. Thackeray had prepared to go to London the same evening, our arrangements not requiring him again until the following Wednesday, when he was to enlighten the good citizens of Norwich. His day's work being over, and the train by which he was to travel not starting till a late hour, he availed himself of the opportunity of playing the part of "entertainer" in a convivial sense by inviting a few gentlemen to dine with him at the Phœnix Hotel. Among the guests were Mr. Flower, brewer, of Stratford-on-Avon (who, in the course of events, held the office of mayor of that town at the time of the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's birthday); the editors and proprietors of certain local newspapers, and the present writer. Mr. Thackeray was in remarkably good spirits — for he felt himself suddenly released from a wearisome burden—and kept up the conversation with unceasing pleasantry, until the waiter came to inform him that he had only just sufficient time to catch the train. Away then he flew, with a hearty "good-bye" to all, and a brief word to me that he should see me at Norwich in due time. Now came a question as to what every-

body was "going to do" on the following day; and Mr. Flower having most kindly invited me to his house at Stratford-on-Avon, I cheerfully availed myself of so favourable an opportunity of visiting that interesting spot for the second time. Mine host lived in a newly built house in the outskirts of the town, and thither he drove me in an elegant vehicle he had just brought from America, with springs as delicate as those of a watch, and wheels as light as those of a velocipede.

CHAPTER XIV.

Stratford-on-Avon—Orsini, the Italian Patriot—A Smoky Bedchamber, and Alarm of the Household — A Visit, with Orsini, to Shakespeare's Birthplace and Stratford Church—A Local Exhibition of Theatrical Portraits—The Grenades for the Attempted Assassination of the Emperor Napoleon—Orsini's Subsequent Crime and Execution — Success of Thackeray's Lectures at Norwich—Severe Illness of Thackeray in that City —His Death and Burial.

I SHOULD be sorry to run the risk of wearying the reader with a detailed account of the kind hospitality I received from Mr. and Mrs. Flower; but an interesting feature in my visit to Stratford now occurs to me. When the time came for my intended departure—Monday afternoon—Mr. Flower begged me to remain until the following day, as Orsini, the Italian patriot, was coming by the next coach,* and would sleep in his house that night. This was certainly a great temptation to me to remain,

* At that time the railway had not yet reached Stratford-on-Avon.

for the unfortunate Italian had not long since published an account of his escape from the Austrian dungeons in Italy, and was, therefore, an object of great interest and curiosity. Mr. Flower had recently been introduced to him at Birmingham, where he learnt that Orsini had been transacting business of an important political nature. Inviting him to become his guest, he reminded him that Stratford was the birth-place of Shakespeare, and that he should take great pride and pleasure in pointing out and explaining to him the historical records connected with the town, and all that pertained to England's greatest poet. To meet so dauntless a patriot and so daring an adventurer as Felice Orsini was certainly an object to be desired, and I cordially thanked Mr. Flower for thus affording me the means of mingling a bit of romance with the every-day events of my purely business-like travels.

The expected guest arrived, and as I had never before seen a bold conspirator, and could form no idea of one beyond that which I had derived from trans-pontine melodramas—wherein he was always represented with long black hair, still blacker eyebrows, a piratical brace of pistols, a terrific stride, like that of the ogre in the nursery story, and a voice of such

tremendous profundity that it would seem to come from the lowest depths of his prodigious boots—I was not a little surprised to find in Orsini, the man who had been banished and imprisoned for revolutionary deeds, an extremely amiable, courteous gentleman, affable in his talk, and most unassuming in his address. We passed the evening together most agreeably, and he told us in very good English many incidents connected with his romantic career; but he never spoke in a manner which would lead to the belief that he was trying to create an effect, or that he was other than an honest patriot, hoping and striving for the deliverance of his country.

He was placed in a bedchamber which had never been occupied before, and our host, in the fulfilment of a duty which was evidently most agreeable to him, insisted upon his having a fire lighted in the room. The result was that in the space of a few minutes the entire house was enveloped in smoke—and smoke of a density and blackness which I thought I had never witnessed before. The whole household were a little alarmed, and I am by no means sure that Orsini was not subjected to a suspicion that he had some traitorous design to smother a respectable English family in smoke; but so strenuously and dexterously

did he exert himself to dispel the obnoxious intruder, that it was next to impossible for anybody to look upon the Italian visitor as an incendiary as well as a rebel. Whispers were afloat, however, amongst the servants that the foreign gentleman who was to pass the night in the house was an escaped convict, and that the crime for which he was imprisoned was nothing short of murder. Hence there was some uneasiness manifested; and the smoky visitation was not exactly calculated to dispel a delusion which was beginning to take its hold of the mistrustful domestics; and whether any one dared to wait upon the awful stranger in the morning and show him those little attentions which are required for the toilet, was never clearly ascertained; but on the housemaid being asked if she had taken the gentleman his boots and hot water, she certainly gave a very evasive answer; and when Orsini made his appearance in the breakfast-room, we had the honour of beholding a patriot in his slippers!

But I will draw the conventional veil over those little domestic occurrences which attended the visit of the Italian revolutionist to the peaceful fireside of an Englishman; and will at once proceed to relate that our host, being unavoidably engaged that morning on

business of an urgent nature, entrusted to me the duty of conducting Orsini through the town, and showing him the birth-place and burial-place of Shakespeare, the portrait in the Town Hall, and the various other "lions" associated with the name of the immortal poet. The task was of course a pleasing one; and it is no affectation on my part to say that my companion appeared to take so much interest in all that he saw, that I could hardly believe I stood in the presence of a man who had devoted his whole life to the regeneration of his country; who had been condemned to death as a traitor; and who while in prison had regained his freedom under circumstances quite as extraordinary and courageous as those which had attended the marvellous escape of De Latude from the Bastille.*

The inscription over the tomb of Shakespeare seemed to impress Orsini very deeply, and he pondered over it

* Orsini's "Narrative of his Incarceration and Escape," published in the year 1856, is a most soul-stirring record of dauntless heroism triumphing over an absorbing sense of wrong. A letter from a resident in Mantua to a friend in London, referring to the escape, says:—"From all parts of the city the population gathered to the spot whence Orsini's wonderful escape had been effected, to convince themselves of the truth of the report, so impossible did it appear to the people of Mantua that a man existed sufficiently venturesome to undertake and execute so perilous an enterprise."

for several minutes, as if it had touched a chord in his susceptible heart. The lines, he said, were worthy of a poet's tomb, and he respected the great nation which had so long honoured them.

The curiosity of my companion, in examining the birthplace of Shakespeare, was mainly directed to the multitudinous signatures on the walls, and he looked with wonder at this extraordinary method of paying homage to genius. He, however, did not hesitate to write his own name, and the old lady who had, and still has, the care of the dwelling, pointed it out to visitors long after Orsini's execution, amongst the signatures of remarkable people who came to the time-honoured shrine. Having shown him all that was to be seen in any way connected with the one dominant name, I persuaded him to accompany me to a small inn, called the Golden Lion, which at that time was kept by Mr. Hartley, a connoisseur in the fine arts, who had formerly been an actor, and who, amongst other pictures, possessed a very interesting collection of theatrical portraits. These decorated the walls of his own apartment and the public sitting rooms, and were sufficiently numerous to occupy our attention for a considerable time; but Orsini had arranged to leave Stratford the same afternoon, and

therefore we were unable to take more than a cursory glance at the more striking features in the exhibition.

On leaving the Golden Lion—and not without paying our respects to its "humming ale" as well as to its works of art—my companion remarked that it was a congenial thought on the part of the landlord to gather together so many objects of dramatic interest in close proximity to the first and final home of the greatest dramatic spirit that the world had ever known. Our agreeable peregrination had occupied us so much longer than we anticipated, that Orsini had barely time to take leave of his host and hostess, and to thank them for the friendly welcome they had given him, ere the coach arrived, and he rapidly mounted to the seat by the side of the driver. I handed to him his leathern travelling-bag, and he wished me "adieu," expressing a hope that he should soon have an opportunity of meeting me in London. He was then on his return to Birmingham, where he had left the bulk of his luggage, and I could not but perceive, during our expedition, that he frequently looked at his watch and inquired anxiously about the coach by which he was to travel. The reader will now be pleased to see that it was in consequence of his association with Birmingham that I have attached an importance to the

fact of my meeting with Orsini which the event might otherwise not be supposed to warrant; for it subsequently transpired in evidence that the immediate object of his visit to that part of the world was to secure the grenades which in the course of a brief period he so recklessly hurled at the carriage of the Emperor Napoleon.

The next time I saw Felice Orsini was in front of the National Gallery, about a week afterwards, when we chatted together for some few minutes respecting our pleasant rencontre at Stratford, and he told me that he was shortly to leave London for Paris. "Well, Signor Orsini," said I, shaking him by the hand, "I am proud to have made your acquaintance. Perhaps I may meet you again."—"*Bien!*" he replied, with a significant up-turning of the eye. "Perhaps not!" Not long after this came the bold, though cowardly, attempt upon the life of the Emperor, followed by Orsini's arrest, his trial and execution, all the circumstances attending which it will be recollected bore testimony to the singular fortitude of his character and his fearless determination to carry out the dread purpose of his remarkable career.

I may here observe that such was the interest he had awakened in the minds of Englishmen by the

perils he had so bravely overcome, and so much was I impressed by the gentleness and affability of his manner, that I greatly regretted that I could feel no possible sympathy for him in the tragical fate which befel him. So basely did he strive to carry his fell mission into effect, that provided he succeeded in destroying the one dominant life he determinately sought, he did not hesitate to sacrifice unoffending women to his vengeance. I own it was not without a shudder that I read the details of his execution, and contrasted the wonderful intrepidity of the man as he passed through the ordeal which prepared him for his death, with the calm and peaceful bearing he betrayed when I met him at Stratford-on-Avon, and pointed out to him the interesting relics which hallow the dust of Shakespeare. His was a daring and heroic spirit, and ought to have been directed to purposes less likely to produce ignoble results.

To return to Mr. Thackeray, of whom I took leave some few pages back, on his departure from Leamington for London. It had been arranged that on the day fixed for the commencement of his readings at Norwich I should endeavour to meet him at a railway station on the route, as the perplexing Bradshaw seemed to indicate that the course of my travels

would enable me to do so. I found that the train by which Thackeray was to leave London would arrive at Ely (whither I had sped to view the glittering cathedral) at a convenient hour in the afternoon, and I was happily at the station in good time to meet him.

It was evident that Mr. Thackeray had been calculating upon the probability of seeing me, as he was naturally anxious to know that all preliminary matters had been settled in regard to his lecture that evening at Norwich. "Well," said he, putting his head out of the window, "is it all right for to-night?" The answer was in the affirmative. "We've got the little man in," he continued; but as he had not given me any idea what special reasons had called him to London, I could not conceive who the "little man" might be; and my difficulty was increased when I tried to divine *where* he had managed to get him in. The phrase "little *one* in" was certainly familiar enough, as amongst the many hilarious exclamations indulged in at social banquets on the occasion of drinking a toast which has been received with enthusiasm; but what Mr. Thackeray meant by the expression "we've got the little *man* in" I confess perplexed me sorely. "The little man in?" I said, interrogatively; "I'm sorry

I don't quite——"—"Why, Jerrold," he proceeded; "we have elected him a member of the Reform Club."

The explanation of this circumstance is briefly this: Douglas Jerrold had been proposed as a candidate for the Reform Club, but as he was known to be a giant in the exercise of those weapons which satire is apt to use somewhat unmercifully, his friends feared that the "minnows" of that institution would rather forego the questionable pleasure of having a Triton amongst them. Thackeray knew that the election was to take place at the Club on the Monday, and hence one of his reasons for running up to London on Saturday night. The fact is worth recording, because the expression of satisfaction which Mr. Thackeray conveyed when he told me that the "little man" was elected, showed how ready he was to perform a friendly office, and went far to prove that the coldness which was said to subsist between the two men could have been little more than apocryphal—save for the observation which is already recorded of Jerrold in this book, "that he had known Thackeray eighteen years, and did not know him yet." The anxious desire of the latter to make him a member of the Reform Club,

and the pleasure he felt when he found that the result was in accordance with his wishes, doubtless caused Jerrold to think that he was easier to comprehend than he imagined. At least he must have been ready to admit that, despite the occasional frigidity of his manner, Mr. Thackeray was not wanting in those attributes which spring from kindliness of heart.

If I remember rightly, Mr. Thackeray's engagement at Norwich required him to give four readings —that is to say, he was to introduce all "The Four Georges"—one each night—to the people of that city. He was received with much cordiality in that bustling capital, and his lectures were attended with a success justly proportioned to their merit; but it was evident that his health was much impaired, and that he was about to endure one of those sad periodical attacks to which he had long been liable. On the concluding night of the series he had some difficulty in getting to the Hall by the usual time, and when arrived there he was in great nervous trepidation, and expressed his fear that he should be quite unable to get through his work. I said what I could to make him more hopeful and cheerful, and when he made his appearance on the

platform he was greeted with such a storm of applause, that he proceeded in his task with scarcely less vigour than he generally displayed; but as he approached the end of his discourse his voice faltered, and it was a severe struggle to him to reach the final sentence.

On the following morning, at an early hour, I received a message from him requesting that I would go and see him at his hotel, as he was laid up with one of his violent attacks. I lost no time in obeying his wish, and on entering his chamber I was much shocked to see him lying closely covered up in bed. He was suffering great pain, and begged that I would not look at him, as he knew he was a hideous object. I entreated that he would place my services entirely at his command, and he replied, with a waving of his hand, that all he wanted was some money out of the exchequer in my possession, as he should unfortunately be detained there by his illness. The desire was of course immediately satisfied, and he would not listen to me when I asked him to allow me to remain with him. It was beyond question under such a seizure as he was then afflicted with that he retired to his bed on that mournful night in December, 1863, when he endured his sufferings for the last time.

Some short period after I had left Mr. Thackeray at Norwich in the condition described, I saw him at his house in London, and on his making allusion to those dreadful illnesses which he said were the very bane of his life, I asked if he had ever received the best medical advice. Certainly he had, was his reply; "but what is the use of advice, if you don't follow it?" he continued. "They tell me not to drink, and I *do* drink. They tell me not to smoke, and I *do* smoke. They tell me not to eat, and I *do* eat. In short, I do everything that I am desired *not* to do, and, therefore, what am I to expect?" I was about to offer a trite remark which naturally suggested itself from the tenor of the conversation; but I merely said his health was of value to the world as well as to himself, and there were hundreds who had read his dedication of "Pendennis" to Dr. Elliotson,* who would rejoice to be informed that he had never again been similarly afflicted.

As I was brought little in contact with Mr. Thackeray from this time forth, except in the lobby of the

* In that dedication the writer says:—"Thirteen months ago, when it seemed likely that this story had come to a close, a kind friend brought you to my bedside, whence, in all probability, I never should have risen but for your constant watchfulness and skill."

Reform Club (where, on occasions when I was waiting for a friend who was a member, I enjoyed the sight of forbidden luxuries), or on the steps of the Garrick, or sauntering along Pall Mall in that *insouciant* manner which was becoming as familiar at the West of London as Johnson's "rolling walk" was in Fleet Street, I shall not weary the reader with any details as to what might, could, would, or should have happened in connexion with his every-day life. My sole object has been to place him before the reader precisely as I saw him, and to jot down such things as appeared to have some little historical interest. The most memorable event I can now call to mind, in relation to Mr. Thackeray, is at the same time the most melancholy one, for it brings me to the morning of Christmas Day, 1863, when I chanced to pay a visit to Horace Mayhew, in Old Bond Street. I entered the room cheerfully,

"As fits the merry Christmas time,"

and proffered the usual good wishes to Mayhew and another friend who was present; but I was surprised to find that my animal spirits met with no response, and that my companions were as depressed as I was inclined to be the reverse. "Haven't you heard?" said Mayhew, looking ominously blank and chop-fallen.

—"Heard!" I exclaimed; "heard *what?*" "Why, about poor Thackeray?"—"No; what about him?" "He's dead!"—"What!" I cried, almost petrified; "*our* Thackeray, the *great* Thackeray?" "Yes," he said, "too true. William Makepeace Thackeray: he died yesterday morning, or on the previous night." This was indeed a piece of news as saddening as it was unexpected, and when it was revealed to me I was dumb with an emotion which it would have been affectation in me to endeavour to disguise. As to Horace Mayhew, he had formed an affection for Thackeray which on that occasion expressed itself in accents of the most bitter grief.

It was soon explained that the lamented writer was found dead in his bed on Christmas Eve, and that the immediate cause of his decease was an effusion of blood on the brain, brought on by one of those violent stomach afflictions to which I have already referred. I could not but remark what a deep gloom the event would cast over many an otherwise happy fireside at that festive period; and I was afterwards led to the reflection that the line above quoted would now too painfully bear the *second* reading given to it by the author—

"As fits the *solemn* Christmas-tide."

The line occurs in the last stanza of a little poem called "The End of the Play," with which Mr. Thackeray's Christmas Book, "Dr. Birch and his Young Friends," closes; and as its plaintive tone of farewell would seem to be especially in harmony with the author's removal from the scene, I will quote the entire verse :—

> "My song, save this, is little worth;
> I lay the weary pen aside,
> And wish for health, and love, and mirth,
> As fits the solemn Christmas-tide.
> As fits the holy Christmas birth,
> Be this, good friends, our carol still—
> Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
> To men of gentle will."

He laid the weary pen aside! If these simple but impressive words may be taken as a foreshadowing of what his feelings might be when called upon to lay it aside for the last time, we may well believe that at that sad moment his thoughts were full of prayer for the earthly peace of all.

The duty of describing in detail the funeral of Mr. Thackeray must be left to his biographer—a character which will, doubtless, ere long be assumed by one who can speak of "greatness greatly;" but as I was present on that mournful occasion I am constrained to allude to it, as affording the last link in the chain of my

reminiscences of this conspicuous example of representative men.

It was on the morning of the 30th December that Thackeray was carried to his resting-place in Kensal Green Cemetery. The atmosphere was warm, crisp, and clear; the ground was unusually elastic, and there was a genial glow over the face of nature which almost forbade the idea that the hundreds who were hastening to the burial-place were absorbed by other than cheering thoughts.

> "The sun shone bright o'er head;
> Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated
> That a great man was dead."

The number of persons present was estimated at about 2000, and amongst them were many of the chosen lights of literature and art. Mr. Charles Dickens, Mr. Robert Browning, Mr. Anthony Trollope, Mr. Mark Lemon, Mr. G. H. Lewes, the historian and critic; Mr. Theodore Martin, poet and satirist; Dr. Russell, of the *Times;* Mr. Frederick Lawrence, the author of "The Life of Fielding;" Mr. Higgins (Jacob Omnium), Mr. Robert Bell, Mr. Millais, R.A., Mr. George Cruikshank, Mr. John Leech, Mr. Shirley Brooks, Mr. Horace Mayhew, Mr. Charles Mathews, Mr. Tom Taylor, Mr. Cres-

wick, R.A., M. Louis Blanc, Mr. John Tenniel, Mr. Edmund Yates—these are a few taken almost at random from the numerous gathering of friends assembled at the Cemetery; but the most noteworthy circumstance struck me as being the deep sympathy shown in the event by a very large majority who could have known nothing of Thackeray, except from his works.

It was, in truth, a ceremony so full of universal interest that it will be remembered as a tribute of respect to one of the few whose genius could alone command it; and, if I might be allowed for one moment to associate the *living* Thackeray with the scene, I should remark how forcibly it brought to the recollection of many, who saw the hearse enter the grounds, the funeral of Douglas Jerrold, when the noble grey head now laid low was observed towering among the pall-bearers. Indeed the mournful proceeding brought these two great names closely together in my mind; and I am free to confess that, remembering what I had seen of the inherent kindness of each, and recognising so many faces at Kensal Green, which, six years before, I had marked at the ceremony at Norwood, I could not but regard the coincidence as fraught with both pleasure and pain. So striking, I

thought, was the similarity between the circumstances attending the two burials, that it was difficult to dispel the illusion that, although the two men were not bound together in life by the strongest ties of friendship, the same spirit of literary brotherhood which had guided their fortunes on earth seemed to hover at last over their graves.

CHAPTER XV.

Vincent Wallace, the Composer—Charles Kemble—His Performances before Her Majesty—The Player and the Tailor—A "Dead Man" *redivivus*—Letters from Charles Kean, Robert Keeley, and Others—Farewell Benefit and Dinner to Charles Mathews—Angus B. Reach and "The Man in the Moon"—A Stray Leaf from that Publication—Mr. Thackeray on Pronunciation—Charles Whitehead and his Writings.

AMONG the pleasures I enjoyed during my association with the musical profession was that of hearing the late Vincent Wallace play the pianoforte in his own drawing-room; sometimes when there was no one present but our two selves, and at others when surrounded by friends whom he had invited to spend the evening with him. In either case he always played to the utmost of his power; and I am not at all afraid of being denounced as "no judge" when I state that a more essentially graceful and sympathetic performer has not been known in modern times. He had the most perfect command over his instrument; and even on occasions when he chanced to be improvising, or composing a melody, it seemed impossible for him to

play a false note. There are many men distinguished in the same profession which he so conspicuously adorned who will gladly admit that to listen to Wallace playing on his stupendous American instrument, when he was in one of his most earnest moods, was a treat which any lover of music would think surpassed the effect produced by any public performance, however great the executant.

As far as my experience goes, it is usual for composers to "write" with the instrument before them and the paper on a table at their side, or, in other words, to develop the intended results by letting the fingers travel over the keys until they have achieved such harmonious sounds as they desire. As a rule, however, this was not the case with Vincent Wallace; for he could compose without any instrument at all. I remember visiting him one day when he had undertaken to set music to words of mine; and I found, to my disappointment, that his piano had been removed for the purpose of some alteration or improvement. I said nothing about the song therefore, as I felt assured that he had not yet been able to give his attention to it; but he presently opened a portfolio, and pointing to a sheet of music covered with pencil notes, exclaimed, "There's your song!"—"But how is this?"

said I; "you have no instrument to help you." "No," he replied; "I don't want an instrument to compose by;" and from that time forth all my doubts, difficulties, and perplexities in regard to the study of music were seriously increased; for that the ruffled sheet of paper *did* contain a melody—and a very charming one—required no further evidence, I presume, than the fact that Wallace hummed it to me, and my ears caught precisely the same sounds which any young lady may produce by her own fair hands, if she will summon up courage to ask at her music-seller's for "The Lov'd one who waits us at home," and play it prettily to the first young gentleman upon whom she desires to make a favourable impression.

Amongst the gifts which Wallace possessed in a marked degree was that of being able, while his finger were on the keys of the pianoforte, to glide imperceptibly from one tune to another without causing the slightest check to continuous harmony. In this accomplishment he was so thoroughly skilled, that the hearer never knew when one tune was going to end and another was about to begin. To make "God save the Queen" flow smoothly and melodiously into "Yankee Doodle," and to cause "The Hallelujah Chorus" to subside, without any apparent effort, into

"Wapping old Stairs," were feats which Wallace performed with as much ease as if it were an elementary part of a musical education. Now, it has occurred to me that if it were possible in these discursive pages to pass from one subject to another with the same facility which Wallace displayed in making one tune flow into another, I should accomplish an object which even our *smoothest* writers might regard with envy and curiosity; but as I do not possess the faculty in question, I fear I may be open to the reproach of being sometimes harsh in my numerous transitions.

Having made these observations, by way of apology to the reader, I must now request him to travel with me some years back, in order that I may have the privilege of introducing him to the great actor, Charles Kemble; although I should at once state that Mr. Kemble was, strictly speaking, a little before my time; that is to say, I had seen him in only one of his performances ere he retired from the stage; and I was then too young to appreciate his histrionic qualities. It happened, however, that, in the year 1840, Her Majesty, knowing the high reputation of the Kembles, and Charles being the only member of the family (of his own generation) then in existence,

made a special request—for it could hardly be said, under the circumstances, to amount to a command—that he would again appear before the public, and give a series of performances at one of the larger theatres. Accordingly it was arranged that Charles Kemble, who it was thought had bid a final adieu to the stage, should play for a certain number of nights at Covent Garden; and the parts selected were: Don Felix ("The Wonder"), Mercutio, Benedick, Charles Surface, and Hamlet; the characters of Don Felix and Mercutio being each performed twice.

Anxious to seize an opportunity of seeing a dramatic artist who was constantly being extolled in my presence, and to whose powers I as constantly regretted that I was almost a stranger, I disbursed out of my slender exchequer ("orders" were, of course, quite out of the question) sufficient to pay for a seat in the boxes, and I went to the theatre on the first night. The play was "The Wonder"—Mr. Charles Kemble playing Don Felix, and Mrs. Nisbett, Violante. The house was crowded to overflowing; and great was the excitement to welcome back to the scene of his former triumphs the highly popular actor who had long retired upon his laurels. Those who remembered him in the zenith of his fame were delighted to renew their

acquaintance with him; and those who had never seen him were still more pleased at the happy chance they now had of supplying such a deficiency in their theatrical experience.

At length the moment arrived for Mr. Kemble's first *entrée*, and when he gallantly bounded on to the stage, pronouncing the words, "My life, my soul, my Violante!" the reception he met with was of so enthusiastic a character that it was too obvious what a loss the play-going world had sustained by his retirement. He could not proceed with the performance for several minutes, for as he was conveying his acknowledgments to the audience, he immediately turned, by a preconceived plan of action, to the royal box, where sat the Queen and suite, and bowed to Her Majesty in a manner at once expressive of so much gratitude and homage, that not even the oldest play-goer present could readily forget the impression thus made upon him.

It would be almost too much to say that Mr. Kemble's bow on that occasion—as he stood there, with his elegant Spanish hat in his right hand, and with his look directed to the royal party on the opposite-prompt side of the dress boxes—was indescribable; but the task must be left—if it has not been already

performed—to some one who is far better conversant with the language specially required for such a purpose. Suffice it for me to say that it was commonly remarked that there was no man upon the stage at that period who could bow with such consummate elegance as Charles Kemble, and I was naturally proud to bear my testimony to the truth and justice of that opinion.

As to Mr. Kemble's representation of Don Felix, it of course afforded a memorable glimpse of the glories that seemed to have passed away; and when I afterwards saw the same character played by a rival actor—no less an artist than James Wallack, who was sometimes compared with Kemble in certain of his impersonations—I was profoundly conscious that, on the eventful night at Covent Garden Theatre, I had witnessed a performance such as there appeared very small chance of my ever seeing again. And this was the general impression conveyed throughout the succeeding representations with which this great actor favoured the public, at the instance of Her Majesty—the "last of the Kembles," as he was called, not taking into account his two accomplished daughters, Fanny and Adelaide—displaying that graceful and dignified bearing, and that full command over the mirth and sympathies of his audience, which had already placed

his dramatic powers among the loftier traditions of the stage.

In confirmation of what I have advanced concerning Mr. Kemble's personal requisites, I may here quote what is said of him in a biography written by a recognised authority in theatrical affairs. "Whatever diversity there may be in the opinion of critics, as to Mr. Kemble's powers on the stage, all who know him will agree that he is the finished gentleman off it." And the same writer adds, in another part of the memoir: "It is no small praise to say, what we think cannot be denied, that Mr. Charles Kemble is at present the only fine gentleman upon the stage." This is precisely the estimate which all competent judges have recorded of Mr. Charles Kemble—that he was, both on and off the stage, an accomplished gentleman. Would we could look upon his like again!

In speaking of Mr. Kemble "off" the stage, I am reminded of an occasion on which I had the privilege of meeting him under somewhat peculiar circumstances. A case, involving a question of some importance to the theatrical profession was in progress of trial at the Court of Common Pleas, Guildhall, and Mr. Charles Kemble had been subpœnaed as a witness. The trial occupied a considerable time, and Mr. Kemble, amongst

other witnesses, was glad to enjoy the air outside the Court rather than endure the close atmosphere of the interior. I was engaged in reporting the case which was being investigated, and on my going out for refreshment in the middle of the day, Mr. Kemble inquired of me how the trial was proceeding, and on our reaching the street together, I discovered, as I replied to his question, that an accident had happened to him of which he was evidently unaware. A capacious rent had been made in a part of his costume which sadly detracted from that dignified appearance associated with the name of the Kembles, and which slightly interfered with one's preconceived notions of this elegant comedian. On my directing his attention to the disaster, he smilingly asked me if I could assist him in getting the mischief remedied. It happened that I knew something of a "knight of the shears" who lived in a neighbouring bye-street, and to him I conducted Mr. Kemble. The tailor was occupied some time in repairing the damage, and when the job was completed Mr. Kemble and I returned to the Court together, the former thanking me most earnestly for the little service which I had rendered him, and which he magnified tenfold.

He had scarcely reached the inner door of the Court before the name of "Charles Kemble" was called by the usher. All eyes being fixed upon the celebrated player, it must have been a matter of no small gratification to him to feel that he had just been relieved from a difficulty which made his personal appearance somewhat *too* attractive. As he entered the witness-box and answered the first question of the examining barrister; Mr. Justice Vaughan, who was trying the case, looked at him intently, and said aloud, "I have often had the pleasure of admiring you on the stage, Mr. Kemble." Then again did I see Charles Kemble make one of his graceful bows as, in acknowledgment of the judge's complimentary remark, he observed, "I am very much obliged to your lordship for saying so." The actor and the judge were remarkably good friends throughout the examination, and so affable and polite was the latter, that the Bar naturally felt it was not often that the Bench was tempted by the presence of a witness to set aside that judicial dignity and reserve which would seem to be in harmony with its responsible function.

Connected with occurrences pertaining to theatricals is a little event which took place in my experience no farther back than the year 1862. I had

spent the afternoon at the Royal Dramatic College, to assist at the inauguration of an annual ceremony at that institution, over which my friend Mr. Benjamin Webster—most artistic and versatile of actors, most youthful and cheery of boon companions—has always presided with so much honour to himself and such benefit to the aged players whose troubles it was designed to mitigate. Having been treated with the greatest attention by the gentlemen to whom the responsible duties of management were entrusted, I was not sorry to find on the return journey that a proposition had been made by one of the party in the same carriage with myself, that we should finish the evening together at the Albion, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, for many years past the tavern *par excellence* where members of the theatrical profession most do congregate. The party consisted of Mr. Robert Bell, Mr. Creswick, the tragedian, Mr. Gruneisen, the well-known musical *savant* and operatic critic, Mr. Benjamin Webster, and myself. The conversation not unnaturally turned from affairs dramatic to matters relating to the press, and especially to the names and merits of writers who were then, as in former days, engaged in supplying criticisms to the daily papers.

Amongst other names brought on the *tapis* was that of Mr. Conan, who had in years gone by established a reputation as the dramatic critic of the *Morning Herald*, then under the editorship of Mr. John Tarte, a near and esteemed relative of mine. I said I well remembered Mr. Conan, as I was formerly engaged on the same paper with him, and that the last I had heard of him was that he was living in Paris; and Mr. Webster observed, that all he knew of him was that his criticisms were always cleverly and conscientiously written; whereupon Mr. Gruneisen remarked that he knew him well, as a man of much ability and gentlemanly bearing, and that he was very sorry to have heard of his death. "Conan dead!" exclaimed Mr. Robert Bell, greatly surprised. "Surely that cannot be, for I saw him a few days ago in London, and I think I must have heard of his death if it had occurred." Mr. Gruneisen, however, repeated his assertion with redoubled confidence, and Mr. Bell was equally positive that he had seen the gentleman and had spoken to him very recently. The contention was becoming somewhat amusing, for it was certainly strange that two public men, in alluding to one whom they had known on intimate terms, should be so much at variance in regard to so important a question as

his life or death; and at length Mr. Gruneisen, in order to show the strength of his conviction, proposed a bet with Mr. Bell of a dinner for the party present, that Mr. Conan was no longer of this world. Mr. Bell accepted the challenge; and it was arranged that, as I was acquainted with Mr. Richard Doyle, the nephew of Mr. Conan, who, by the way, had been the means of introducing him to *Punch;* I should write to him and inquire where his uncle then resided, and whether he was in good health, stating, as my excuse, if I remember rightly, that I had heard some news respecting him which had caused his friends no little anxiety. It was also agreed that, in the event of Mr. Conan being alive and in London, he should be invited to the dinner which was to be the result of the bet, and which was to take place at Clunn's Hotel, Piazza, Covent Garden. In Mr. Doyle's reply to my note he said:—

"Mr. Conan has been living for some years in Paris. He is, however, just now in London, and is staying at my father's house, Cambridge Terrace, Hyde Park. And I may add that he is in very good health."

This was certainly a most satisfactory settlement of the question, and I immediately made the fact known

to the gentlemen who were interested in the bet. With Mr. Creswick I communicated by letter, as I was at that time less in the habit of meeting him than I was the others; and the following was the reply I received:—

"I am delighted to learn the result of your inquiries, and hope I may have the honour of meeting the dead alive.

"Our friend Gruneisen would rather have fed us for any period than have *won* his bet.

"With thanks and pleasant anticipations."

Mr. Conan cheerfully accepted the invitation, and was much amused when informed by his friend Gruneisen, previous to the dinner, as to the circumstances which had led to the intended *réunion*. The evening came, and Mr. Gruneisen, like a considerate and polite host, was the first to be present, and Mr. Conan being the second, the other guests as they arrived were respectively introduced to the "dead man." The dinner spoke much for the liberality and good taste of the gentleman who had lost it and ordered it, and every one at the table was in remarkably good spirits, various little speeches arising in the course of the evening, which tended to the conclusion that, quite irrespective of the singular *cause* of Mr. Conan's presence,

he had been connected by so many associations with the majority of the party, that Mr. Gruneisen could not have found amongst his living friends a more welcome or agreeable guest. In short, Mr. Creswick's pleasant anticipations were most amply realized; and never was a bet more cheerfully lost or more willingly paid.

I come now by a sudden, but not unnatural, transition to a portion of my book which will have little to recommend it beyond a few letters, and those not of a very remarkable kind; but inasmuch as they bear the signatures of men who have long been objects of interest to the public, and as they all refer, more or less, to matters connected with my personal recollections, I cannot think they will be considered out of place in this work. The two following letters from Mr. Charles Kean were written during his successful management of the Princess's Theatre, and refer to a newspaper for which I occasionally wrote dramatic notices.

"My dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for the few lines you have kindly inserted in the ——, relating to our benefit last night.

"I could have wished, however, that you had informed your readers that the theatre overflowed in every part, instead of comprising a 'very numerous

audience,' which is a phrase usually applied to a house respectably filled, but not over-crowded. I should fear the public will not be aware, by your announcement, of the very brilliant compliment that was paid to Mrs. Kean and myself.

"Allow me to say, in reference to a remark of yours concerning my 'physical energy,' that I was not aware that mere physical acting was one of my distinguishing points; and certainly I regret to hear that even a single writer is under an impression which can neither exalt me in my own estimation nor in the opinion of the public; and would certainly never have placed me, where many of the journals have said I am, at the head of the English stage.

"The character above all others that laid the foundation of my fame and fortune (Hamlet), is assuredly one that calls for mental rather than physical illustration. Pray excuse my troubling you on this matter, and place what I have said to my earnest desire to please those whose judgment I esteem, and whose good opinion I am anxious to possess.

"Princess's Theatre, July 15, 1851."

"Dear Sir,—I wish very much you could make it convenient to give us a few lines in the —— on our 'Merchant of Venice,' next Monday. The fact is I have engaged Miss Frankland, for the purpose of relieving Mrs. Kean of the hard work she underwent last season (playing 310 nights out of 320), and I am

naturally anxious that this young lady should be supported to the full extent of her merits, so as to be made sufficiently acceptable to the public in the absence of my wife. I have no idea myself how she will play the character of Portia, but I am well convinced from her acting in other parts that it cannot be less than creditable, and any good word you can afford her will oblige me.

"Princess's Theatre, Dec. 6, 1851."

The next letter, from a celebrated actor, which I offer is brief and unimportant; but it will be admitted by those who knew the writer to be perfectly characteristic of him; for he had a difficult game to play during his management of the Lyceum Theatre, and he could not submit tacitly to any unfavourable mention of the performances under his control. It will be seen from the subjoined note that I had been guilty of the grievous indiscretion of asking for an admission to his theatre, under conditions which I thought justified the act.

"My dear Hodder, — You could not have addressed your note from a quarter less likely to command civilities than the —— newspaper-office. That paper has stood prominent amongst our unfriends when a kind word has been our need. I confess I did not expect it from the lot I know there. I send

you the admission (but certainly not because addressed from the —— office), and wish you a happy new year.

"Yours truly,

"R. KEELEY."

The following note from Walter Lacy, the comedian, whose acquaintance I made previous to his *début* on the London stage (as Charles Surface, at the Haymarket Theatre), is given because it refers to a tablet which was executed by my brother-in-law, and was about to be erected to the memory of one who has played a not unimportant figure in this volume:—

"I have received a note from your sister-in-law, conveying a request in your name that I will contribute to the expenses incurred for a tablet about to be erected to the late Henry Baylis. I need not tell you that an actor with a family is not likely to be at all times too well within his means, but I will give you a subscription with pleasure to the object you have in view. Where are you, and when shall we have the pleasure of seeing you in town? Shall I send the money to your sister-in-law, or give it to you when I see you?"

The next letter from the same writer conveys, alas! a lamentable proof that I was once betrayed into the youthful weakness of attempting to write for the stage.

"The farce, although well written, does not suit me. Too much verbiage. The first four-and-twenty pages might be told in as many lines. A light comedian wants a situation for himself, not for the low comedy man, and a few detonating lines instead of long speeches which prevailed fifty years ago. I should advise you to get J. Rogers or Clarke to read it, and then send it to the Strand for Mr. Swanborough, who, as a young hand, perhaps would be pleased with Rattleton, and the audience repaid for waiting when Rogers or Clarke comes on in black crape."

A letter from a man of such acknowledged ability as John Baldwin Buckstone, whether as author, actor, or manager, could hardly be otherwise than welcome to the reader, except under circumstances which might seem prejudicial to the interest of this long established favourite. I hope, therefore, I need offer no excuse for introducing the following, as it bears testimony to the success of one of his ventures, and tends to show that for many years he has unceasingly contributed to the amusement of the public, both in London and the provinces.

"Birmingham, Wednesday, Sept. 14, 1864.

"My dear Sir,—I do not know whether you are still connected with the —— newspaper, but if you are, will you be kind enough to make an allusion to the opening of the Haymarket on Monday next?

"The Haymarket company has had a wonderfully successful tour. We played six weeks at Manchester, two at Bradford, one at Leeds, and are finishing up here. We have represented nothing but our standard comedies: 'The School for Scandal,' 'She Stoops to Conquer,' 'The Rivals,' 'The Beaux Stratagem,' 'Twelfth Night,' 'As You Like It," and 'The Lady of Lyons.' These, with our best Haymarket farces, have been wonderfully attractive, drawing overcrowded houses everywhere, and have been received with every expression of delight—I presume from the rarity of their production in the provinces.

"Very truly yours,

"J. B. Buckstone."

In the same year, being tempted by a clever and ambitious friend of mine to play Beaumont to his Fletcher, or Fletcher to his Beaumont (I presume it is not very material which?) and prepare a piece for the stage, I was induced to make another attempt in that direction, and having written to Charles Mathews to say that I had an "idea" to communicate to him, he sent me the following note in reply:—

"25, Pelham Crescent, Nov. 30, 1864.

"My dear Sir,—A good idea is a capital thing. When shall we meet? I am at the St. James's every evening from seven till eleven, and always here till

one. Perhaps the former may be more in your beat, and I shall be happy to see you. Take your choice.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

Unhappily for me, but of course happily for Charles Mathews and the British public, matters of grave moment prevented my calling upon the ever buoyant and facetious comedian—(let us hope that his youthful spirits and unequalled vivacity may ever remain as fresh and unimpaired as they were at that moment)—and thus entering into a project which might possibly have enabled me to "see something to my advantage." In the course of time, therefore, I received from C. M. the following laconic reminder, which appears to me to be worth preserving, if only for the fact that it is exactly like a little bit of dialogue from one of his farces, and we can readily fancy his delivering it in character:—

"25, Pelham Crescent, Nov. 19, 1865.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Don't hurry!

"I have been waiting for it exactly a twelvemonth. I merely mention it.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

It would not be a very difficult task to recount the many successes achieved by Mr. Charles Mathews, from the date of his *début* at the Olympic Theatre, upwards of thirty years ago, to the time of his last engagement at the same theatre, in the season of 1868 (when he appeared in a version by himself of Foote's farce of "The Liar," and in a capital little piece by Maddison Morton, called, "If I had a Thousand a Year"); but the reader would hardly thank me for the enumeration, as this book does not profess to be a record of theatrical events, except in so far as they may suggest some appropriate incident or anecdote. Suffice it that no actor of his time has enjoyed more unalloyed popularity—has more completely won and sustained the good opinion of all classes of play-goers than Charles Mathews; one great and prevailing reason being that from the very outset of his career he has shown himself a master of the art to conceal his art—a trite proverb, it is true, but one which inevitably forces itself upon the mind in speaking of this most entertaining performer; for it is an undoubted fact that when he is acting his best he does not appear to be acting at all. Higher praise than this could not be bestowed, as Fielding has amply testified in the scene in which Partridge visits the theatre with

Tom Jones, and the former declares that he sees nothing extraordinary in the acting of Garrick, and that, if he were to encounter a ghost under similar circumstances, he should do exactly as the player did. In short, Charles Mathews is always natural in his articulation; always light and buoyant in his step; easy and voluble in his speech; elastic and dashing in his action, and never otherwise than gentlemanly. Moreover, he has seldom, if ever, been at fault in his costume.

If any further proof of Charles Mathews's exceptional merits were wanted beyond that which is unquestionably supplied by his acting, it would at once be found in the marked contrast which is observed when any one of his contemporaries essays a character which he has previously represented. Take, for example, Sir Charles Coldstream, in the comedy of "Used-Up," in the first act of which Charles Mathews may be said to have reached the summit of his fame. I once saw a well-known actor attempt the personation of this part, and he was so entirely the opposite of Mathews—so deficient in that gentlemanly dignity and ease—that quiet *nonchalance* and supreme contempt for everything and everybody about him, which are the leading features of the

character—that the performance in his hands was obviously the very reverse of the author's admirable conception.

But I have no thought of writing a criticism upon Charles Mathews and his acting, and I have been betrayed into the above remarks by a desire to bring his name forward in connexion with two dramatic events which occurred so recently as the month of January last. Those events will no doubt afford interesting material to future chroniclers of the stage; but as I was actively employed in relation to both of them, I shall offer no excuse for venturing to discount history.

The first event, it will be remembered, was a farewell benefit to Mr. Mathews, at Covent Garden Theatre, on his sailing for the Antipodes; the second was a complimentary dinner at Willis's Rooms. The benefit took place in the morning of Tuesday, January 4. The programme showed the high esteem in which Charles Mathews was held by his fellow-members of the theatrical profession, while the result testified to the favourable opinion entertained of him by the play-going world. I shall not detail the bill of fare, as the reader will doubtless have become familiar with it through the newspapers

of the time; but I may state that there was scarcely an actor of repute in the metropolis who was not present, either in his histrionic capacity or as a spectator. Among those who took part in the performances was Mrs. Keeley, who manifested the warm interest she felt in the event by generously emerging from her retirement to play a subordinate character.

The entertainments comprised a variety of detached scenes (in accordance with the rule invariably adopted at morning performances), including selections from "The House on the Bridge," "School," "The Lady of Lyons," "Not such a Fool as He Looks," "The Toodles," and "The Critic." The chosen portion of the last-mentioned piece was the second act, in which the tragedy of "The Spanish Armada" is rehearsed, and in which Charles Mathews, who played Puff, made his sole appearance on the occasion. In order to convey an idea of the kindly feeling displayed towards Mr. Mathews by the profession, I give the cast of the *dramatis personæ*:—

Dangle . . . . . Mr. Alfred Wigan.
Sneer . . . . . Mr. Barry Sullivan.
Puff . . . . . Mr. Charles Mathews.
Prompter . . . . . Mr. Arthur Sketchley.
Under Prompter . . . . . Mr. Charles Mathews, Jun.*

* A son of Mrs. Mathews by a former husband; but his assumption of the popular name is, of course, sufficiently intelligible.

CHARACTERS IN THE TRAGEDY.

Lord Burleigh.	Mr. BUCKSTONE.
Governor of Tilbury Fort . .	Mr. FRANK MATTHEWS.
The Earl of Leicester . . .	Mr. JOHN CLARKE.
Sir Walter Raleigh	Mr. L. BROUGH.
Sir Christopher Hatton . . .	Mr. W. H. PAYNE.
Master of the Horse	Mr. J. D. STOYLE.
Beefeater	Mr. J. L. TOOLE.
Whiskerandos	Mr. COMPTON.
First Sentinel	Mr. F. PAYNE.
Second Sentinel	Mr. H. PAYNE.
First Niece	Mrs. KEELEY.
Second Niece	Mrs. F. MATTHEWS.
Tilburina	Mrs. CHARLES MATHEWS.
Confidante	Mrs. CHIPPENDALE.

It will be seen from this distribution of characters that many of our most popular artists descended from their high estate to represent such parts as are generally assigned to performers of a far inferior degree; but all worked together with the one generous purpose, and Charles Mathews received an ovation the recollection of which doubtless afforded him some compensation for his toil and anxiety in journeying from England to Australia. In the few parting words which he addressed to the audience at the close of the performances he expressed in graceful terms the gratitude he felt, but he could not refrain from making one of those characteristic observations in which he

has always indulged concerning his monetary affairs. In referring to the fact that the magnificent demonstration in his honour had taken place without the aid of placards or bills, he said he thought the circumstance all the more remarkable, as he remembered the time when his *bills* were flying about all over London!

As to Charles Mathews's rendering of Puff, it may be safely affirmed that he never showed a more perfect appreciation of the part—never displayed more agility, or spoke with more volubility and *abandon* than he did on this interesting occasion. I chanced to be on the stage at one of the front wings during the performance, and was standing next to Mr. Ryder, the tragedian, whose generous and enthusiastic remarks, as Charles Mathews tripped lightly through his task, afforded some answer to the oft-repeated accusation that actors are niggard of their praise to each other. "By gad, he's wonderful!" exclaimed Ryder several times, in his deep-toned voice. "The greatest genius the stage has produced in his day! As to his age," he went on to say, as the comedian continued to delight and surprise the audience; "why, he shows *no* age, but is as youthful as he ever was."

And there was certainly a great deal of truth in what Mr. Ryder said, for Charles Mathews may fairly be regarded as a geuius in his way; while the question as to his age may be summed up by the remark that, in the appearance he presented before the spectators that morning, he showed no marked change either in action, figure, or utterance—certainly not in *voice*—since those early days at the Olympic, when he played George Rattleton, in the "Humpbacked Lover," and the smart groom in "The Old and Young Stager."

The benefit was in all respects a remarkable success; and I may add that the attainment of this result was greatly promoted by Mr. Arthur Sketchley and Mr. W. R. Sams, who, in the capacity of honorary secretaries, exerted themselves in a manner which Mr. Mathews will no doubt remember among the many bright proofs he has received, that amid the cares and reverses of his profession he can point to a few sterling friends who are ever ready to acknowledge publicly his claims to personal regard as well as to popular applause. As to my old friend William Raymond Sams, he is an experienced practitioner in this way, for innumerable have been the "benefits" and charitable objects with which he has asso-

ciated himself, either in the character of honorary secretary or that of a liberal benefactor; and on all occasions he has acted with a delicacy and conciliatory taste which have won for him an amount of esteem such as few men have the happiness to enjoy.

The same two gentlemen who performed such friendly offices in the arrangements for the benefit, set to work with equal fervour and disinterestedness in the preparations for the dinner which took place on Monday, January 10; and as I had rendered some little service to those zealous honorary secretaries in the one instance, I was glad to be useful to them in the other. Hence I had an opportunity of observing the difficulties which inevitably beset those who engage in the mighty task of getting up a public dinner; and in the present instance those difficulties were by no means lessened by the fact that Mr. Mathews the guest, was also Mr. Mathews the host—that is to say, the vivacious comedian, perceiving that it would not be easy to find a fitting person to preside on the occasion, at once consented, "with characteristic modesty" (as described in a preliminary notice in the newspapers), to be his own chairman. In this state of things it was natural that he should wish to be supported, right and left, by as many of his own immediate friends and patrons

as might desire to be present; and thus the task of allotting the seats at the principal table seemed almost insurmountable. Everybody could not sit at the principal table, that was quite clear; and yet it would appear that out of some three hundred guests about two-thirds would be offended if they were not conspicuously placed.

Messrs. Sketchley and Sams went about their duty with a determination to do the best they could to please all parties; but it soon became tolerably obvious that this resolve would terminate in their pleasing no one. For it was not only in assigning a particular place to each individual that the difficulty was felt, but also in taking care that no two gentlemen should be seated together of whom it might be suspected that they would stick their forks into each other. For example, the name of a well-known dramatist transpired; "Where shall we put him?" inquired a member of the committee."—"Next to ——" (an equally well-known actor). "No, no; that wont do at all," cried another. "They don't speak."—"Why?" "——'s last piece was damned, and he declares that ——, who played the principal character, was the cause of it." A celebrated Shakesperean commentator and critic had procured a ticket. "What shall we do with him?"—"Put him

by the side of ——, the 'burlesque writer.'" "That can't be; —— doesn't care for Shakespeare."—"All the better; —— will convert him. Stick them together." And with this kind of dialogue the important process of arranging the seats was carried on, until at length there seemed reason to fear that the two innocent honorary secretaries had sown the seeds of a sufficient amount of discord to produce a sad effect upon what has always been theoretically called "the harmony of the evening."

But when the evening came, the prospect of a good dinner (and a good dinner it certainly was—as, indeed, may invariably be said of the banquets of Mr. Willis), and the cheering aspect of the tastefully-decorated room, restored many a malcontent to a state of comparative ease; and Messrs. Sketchley and Sams, by their adroit and urbane behaviour, even under the most adverse conditions of fault-finding, contrived to escape fine and imprisonment. Of course it turned out that naval and military officers and others who were *not* connected with literature and the drama, occupied the posts of honour; while those who had written for, or who had acted on, the stage all their lives were sprinkled about the room with the most exemplary promiscuousness!

But this seemed inevitable, and little blame was expressed. As to the dinner itself, or rather the speech-making attending it, the company seemed amply gratified, except at the fact that the toast of The Stage was placed before that of Dramatic Literature; and that, whereas the former was given and responded to, the latter was entirely omitted, although two gentlemen, each distinguished in his way—the one as a dramatic writer, and the other as a civil servant of the Crown and a warm patron of the drama—had been requested, and had consented, to be responsible for its observance.

The task of proposing the health of the chairman was assigned to Mr. George Augustus Sala, who made an earnest and characteristic speech; but I should mention that this was preceded by a few observations from Mr. Mathews, in which he humorously excused himself for not giving his own health, and skilfully introduced the following precedent for his appearing in the double character of host and guest:—"I was going to say," he observed, "that I was placed in not only a novel but unprecedented position in being asked to occupy the chair to-day. But it is not so. There is nothing new in saying, there is nothing new under the sun; and I find in the *Times* newspaper of

Oct. 3, 1798, an advertisement of a dinner given to Mr. Fox, at the Shakespeare Tavern, Covent Garden, on the anniversary of his first election for Westminster—'the Honourable Charles James Fox in the chair.' Here is a great precedent; and what was done in 1798 by Charles James Fox, is only imitated in 1870 by Charles James Mathews."

It need hardly be said that the company were heartily amused at this happily-chosen parallel; and indeed it might be taken as the key-note to the speeches which it was the duty of the chairman to make. He had struck the right chord, and whenever he stood up in the fulfilment of his mission he was received with as much laughter as if he were in presence of an audience at the theatre. Thus was the most perfect good feeling and unanimity preserved throughout the evening; and Mr. Mathews must indeed have been gratified at a result to which his own taste and judgment greatly contributed, and which was witnessed by a considerable number of the most distinguished authors, actors, and critics known in the dramatic world.

I have thought it right to give this brief sketch of the "double event" which preceded Charles Mathews's departure for Australia, as it cannot be considered a

whit less interesting because it is of recent occurrence; but a more ample detail of the proceedings of the farewell benefit and the complimentary dinner must be left, as I have already hinted, to the descriptive power of some future historian who will have a better opportunity of exercising his "imagination" than an eye-witness could possibly hope for!

Lest it should be supposed that Mr. Mathews was not sufficiently grateful for the handsome tribute which had been paid to his merits, I may here give the following letter, which I received from him a week after his departure; although I confess that the very small service I was enabled to render by no means justified such extremely flattering language:—

"Nice,* January 19, 1870.

"My dear Mr. Hodder—Thanks! thanks! thanks! I was in such a state of excitement on Monday night that I don't know whom I said 'good-bye' to, or to whom I didn't. But in case I missed you, consider this as a hearty shake of the hand; and accept my sincere thanks for all your kind and most efficient

* Mr. Mathews, who was accompanied by Mrs. Mathews and her son, chose the overland route for his journey, and stopped at Nice, *en route*, in order, as he said, to accustom himself to the sight of the sea, for he had an absolute dread of the voyage.

exertions in my cause. It was a glorious time for me, and never can be forgotten; and associated with it will always be the names of the friendly fellows who laboured so successfully in bringing it about. Again cordially thanking you,

"Believe me faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

It is not to be supposed that in a work of this kind a biographical notice should accompany every letter which is produced or every mention which may be made of an incident in the life and career of a distinguished character. In reviewing my correspondence—which I here take leave to state, if I have not already done so, I never entertained the remotest idea of bringing before the world,—I find many letters which bear, to a certain extent, upon public events, or upon the peculiar characteristics of those who wrote them; and, without arrogating to myself any position or privileges in regard to them, I think I shall be excused for inserting them here, because they refer directly or indirectly to matters of something more than mere personal interest.

The following letter from Mr. John Tenniel is given because it states a fact with which the public at large cannot at present be acquainted, and which I

feel assured need not be kept a secret from those who would gladly possess something more than a mere passing knowledge of *Punch*, and of the workings of that renowned hero's brain. That this most able representative of our English illustrators will not himself object to the publication of the brief epistle I think I may naturally take for granted, as it may possibly have the effect of saving Mr. Tenniel from other applications of the kind to which his note refers :—

"I feel much flattered that your friend Mr. Beale should wish to have the sketch of my 'Lion,' and I should have great pleasure in presenting it to him, but for the following impediment to my doing so, namely, that I have NO SKETCH. The drawing in question, like all my drawings for *Punch*, was made at once upon the wood."

I avail myself of this opportunity of quoting the subjoined letter from Mr. Shirley Brooks, a fellow-worker with Mr. Tenniel, in the establishment of *Punch*, as it affords an illustration of the considerate kindness and urbanity which that favourite writer invariably evinces towards his brethren of the pen; and, moreover, it enables me to acknowledge publicly an opportune literary service which he rendered me some

years ago, when, owing to an accumulation of troubles, I was doomed to a forced residence in Ireland.

The letter refers to a little contribution I had forwarded to his care for publication in "Once a Week."

Mr. Brooks wrote—

"I had not been at the office for some days, or your note would have had an earlier answer. I placed your verses before the editor directly they arrived, and, as he is now out of town, I cannot at the moment ascertain their fate, but I greatly fear that, if they have not been accepted, they must have fallen under the action of the stern law which consigns unused *poetical* contributions to *a* fate, it being supposed that a poet has always a copy of his work. I shall be exceedingly sorry, should this, under the circumstances, turn out to be the case, for I thought the lines very pretty, and even if they did not do for O. a W., were quite certain to be used elsewhere. All I can do, however, is to make search and inquire, and this shall be done at once."

Mr. Shirley Brooks is, I believe, regarded as the most valuable contributor whom Mr. Punch has taken into his confidence since he acquired an accession to his original staff; but during his long association with the periodical he has published three novels—

"Aspen Court," "The Gordian Knot," and "The Silver Cord"—all of which achieved a sufficient popularity to point him out as a writer of fiction quite capable of maintaining his position among the highest representatives of this branch of literature. As a table companion he is especially distinguished for his pleasant conversational power; and there are few men of his day whose minds are so well stored with those features of general knowledge—either of things past or present—which are necessary to the promotion of intellectual intercourse.

Closely allied to Mr. Shirley Brooks in various literary undertakings was the late Angus Bethune Reach, whom I first knew as a reporter to the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper, and who was one of the chosen writers brought forward by Douglas Jerrold in the "Illuminated Magazine," as recorded in another part of this book. The following note from him is here quoted because it refers to a little comic publication—"The Man in the Moon"*—

* "The Man in the Moon" was an illustrated monthly affair, started in the year 1846 under the joint editorship of Albert Smith and Angus Reach. The artists were Mr. Hine, Mr. Archibald Henning, Mr. G. A. Sala (the last-mentioned being also one of the literary staff), and the French caricaturist "Cham." Prominent amongst the contributors were Shirley Brooks and Charles Kenney;

containing a burlesque allusion to myself, together with some exquisite works of art which are far too spirit-stirring, and at the same time too truthful, not to be reproduced:—

"My dear George,—I ought to have written you ere now. The Broughs* makeup the 'Moon,' so that when there is copy over what is wanted, they have the ultimate selection of it. I can only say that I sent the 'Matrimonial Definitions' to the printer, with a lot of other copy, some of which appeared and some of which didn't. I am rejoiced to hear you are engaged on the ——, and hope you will have no forced intervals of leisure in future. Come and call—do."

---

and the former published in the "Moon" a poem, called "Our Flight with *Punch*," by way of answer to some Asmodean "Flights" which had appeared in the latter periodical. Mr. Brooks's verses were said at the time to combine the harmonious numbers of Pope with the severity of the satire of Swift; but, after all, there are few lasting animosities in literature; and Mr. Punch's formidable opponent of that period has long since been one of his stanchest friends.

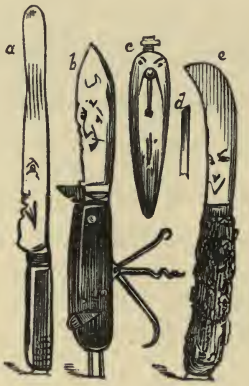
* The "Brothers Brough," Robert and William, made for themselves a name, not only for their burlesques (which were always eminently successful), but for their general contributions to periodical literature. The former will be especially remembered for his "Songs of the Governing Classes," the "Life of Sir John Falstaff," and many other compositions, poetical and prose, apart from his dramatic productions. The latter wrote many of his best pieces for the stage after his brother's death, which took place, at a premature age, in 1860; and I lament to say that, while these pages were in the printer's hands, William Brough was removed from the scene, at the early age of 44.

(COPY OF AFFIDAVIT.)

GEORGE OHDEAR, philosophical historian and lyric poet, maketh oath and sayeth—

1. That the above are true, exact, and faithful portraits of the pens with which he was supplied, to write "A Shower of Frogs," in the Crown Tavern.

On indignantly summoning the waiter and demanding if there were no more practicable writing implements in the house—was answered in the negative; but told he could have a knife to mend them.



2. He maketh another oath and sayeth, that the foregoing are true, exact, and faithful portraits of the knives wherewith to mend the aforesaid pens he was supplied with at the Crown Tavern.

All of which he declares to be true.

(Signed) GEORGE OHDEAR.

As witness my hand and seal, HENRY BAYLESS,
J. P.,* and *Custos Bottleorum.*

Whether my excellent and now long deceased friend Reach wrote the above himself I am not prepared to say, but as he was one of the editors of "The Man in the Moon," I shall not be guilty of any impropriety in associating his name with so valuable a contribution to the undying literature of his day.

In allusion to the name of "Reach"—a Scotchman, it should be remembered—an amusing anecdote is told of Thackeray, who was not very remarkable for those verbal jokes and witticisms which are recorded of some of his contemporaries, but who occasionally produced a hearty laugh by a quaint utterance

* J. P., otherwise Jolly Person.

such as would seem to belong to him alone. Angus Reach met him at a dinner party, and much to the dismay of the former, Thackeray persisted in pronouncing his name Reetch—in one syllable—instead of Re-ack, as he was wont to be called, in accordance with the nearest approach to the Gaelic which Englishmen could be supposed to make. At length poor Reach summoned up courage to state that his name was not "Reetch," but *Re-ack*. Thackeray made no observation at the moment, but watching a favourable opportunity, he held up a peach in his hand, and looking towards the proud owner of the Scotch name, said, "Mr. Re-ack, may I offer you a pe-ack."

The name of Charles Whitehead, although it has not been before the public of late years, will be perfectly familiar to a large circle of readers; and few, if any, will deny that he was one of those writers whose fame has never been duly proportioned to their ability. He was a man of a singularly nervous temperament; and yet he wrote with a power and fervour which few of his contemporaries who, like himself, were endeavouring to make their mark, could be said to equal. Witness his interesting play of "The Cavalier," produced at the Haymarket Theatre many years since, with Vandenhoff and Miss Ellen Tree in

the principal characters. The plot is ably carried out to a most touching and effective conclusion, and the dialogue is written with so much passion and vigour, that it was said after the first night's performance that there were passages in it which Massinger would not have been unwilling to own.* His poem of "The Solitary," written in his more youthful days, also proved him to be a writer of no common powers, and the metrical vein he there betrayed entered largely into his prose writings. The other works by which he is more particularly known are "The Autobiography of Jack Ketch," "The Narrative of John Ward Gibson," "Tavern Heads," in "The Heads of the People,"† and his novel of "Richard Savage" (founded chiefly upon Johnson's Life of that ill-fated poet), published originally in "Bentley's Miscellany," and admirably illustrated by John Leech.

* It may be worthy of mention that on the night of the production of this play it was listened to with the profoundest attention, and was vehemently applauded throughout, until the final scene, but this being of too painful a character, the audience gave signs of dissatisfaction; and when the piece was announced for repetition, there was a general cry of—"With alterations." Those alterations were made, and "The Cavalier" had a prosperous career.

† A monthly work, projected and edited by Douglas Jerrold, and illustrated by Kenny Meadows. It purported to describe typical characters in every-day life; and amongst its contributors were many of the foremost writers of the time.

He was also, I believe, the author, in his earlier days, of an amusing trifle, called "Passages in the Life of Jonathan Loosefish, Esq.," and it has been said, though I cannot remember on what authority, that, owing to the graphic power displayed in this book, Charles Whitehead was once applied to by the publishers to associate himself with Mr. Seymour in the production of the work which afterwards became world-famous under the title of "The Pickwick Papers;" but Mr. Dickens himself fully explains, in his preface, the origin of "Pickwick."

My immediate connexion with Charles Whitehead arose from the fact of my holding a responsible position in the establishment of a weekly newspaper, in which it was the custom to publish continuous stories. Being asked to recommend a sterling writer who would supply such material, I had no hesitation in introducing Charles Whitehead; but unhappily it turned out that his health, always more or less delicate, had long been failing him, and the story he commenced was never finished, as the paper ceased to exist in the course of its progress, and he lacked the mental courage to resume the work in another form. The subjoined letters will, I think, be considered interesting, as betraying the care and anxiety of a struggling

man of letters, whose mind was enfeebled by physical weakness, and who evidently had some mistrust of his own powers. He was then living in a little narrow street leading out of Red Lion Square, his parlour being on the ground floor, and his "view" from the window where he sat, in the thraldom of literary composition, being limited to the movements in the gutter which flowed beneath it. The story he was engaged upon was called "The Orphan."

"21st August, 1852.

"I had been bothering myself about a title before your note came.

"I did not understand from what you said that you wanted it on the instant.

"On Monday morning, however, you shall certainly have it. It is difficult to hit upon a striking title, which shall not carry with it somewhat of melo-dramatic hysteria, or 'Did you ever?'-ism. But I will do my best.

"A mixture of tragedy and comedy by all means."*

"10th Sept. 1852.

"I beg to acknowledge, with many thanks, a cheque in payment for the first number of 'The Orphan.'

"You need not urge me to get on with the story.

* It had been suggested to him that the work should assume that form.

I hope to send you the second part on Tuesday evening, and after that I intend to be in advance for my own sake as well as your convenience; for now-a-days I am a bad hand at writing against time, being excited and highly nervous.

"I forward you a copy of 'The Solitary,' which you will oblige me by accepting."

"24th Sept. 1852.

"Be so kind as to tell Mr. Willott * that I am sorry I was so late. This shall never be, I think I may venture to say, again. I have been miserably ill, but am now much better. You shall have the next number by Monday night, and I will in future always be in advance.

"As I proceed with the work, I mean to 'come it' as strong as I can. I have materials for some striking scenes."

In the course of time Mr. Whitehead, finding that the state of his health prevented his battling successfully with other writers who were then springing into fame, emigrated to Australia, where he not long afterwards died.

During the period of my immediate connexion with Charles Whitehead and the weekly paper above re-

* The proprietor of the paper, and formerly the owner of the *Sheffield Times*.

ferred to, I sometimes met in society the then well-known composer, John Blewitt (who, though far advanced in years, often created considerable amusement by singing a song of his own writing, the burden of which was "Where's the harm in a kiss—a kiss?"); and as I find in my desk the following characteristic letter from him, I give it without any attempt at comment, which indeed it cannot be said to require:—

"Dec. 20, '52.

"My dear young old Friend,—I have often been puzzled to know whether I have your right address or name, so stupid am I; and I ought not to forget my lively friend. However, I venture, and here goes. I have been entrusted with the music of the pantomime for Drury Lane this year, and although I have been a great invalid and am still so, I have done my best and to my satisfaction, as well as that of the theatre. Any notice you can give me in your paper as to the overture and music of the *opening*, will be doing me a service for this season. Being some time as it were dead to the public, they have thought I had lost the little tact I had for composition, but the proof of the pudding (the Christmas one) is in the eating, but I know you have a good taste for those things.

"The publishers in particular have thought me deficient in notes—as I am in pocket—but my tact for

composition is as vivid as ever; so that a kind word from the press, if I am deserving, may induce them to give me an order to write, or to purchase what I may have for sale. If by so little trouble so much *good* can be done for an old British musician, a hint is sufficient to the gentlemen of the press, and at this period of life I require it to support my family.

"I wish I could be favoured with a call. I do not want to draw on your purse: it is for the pleasure of five minutes' chat only. I have a good grand pianoforte, and will play and sing to you. At all events, favour me with a few lines, in addition to your paper. You may meet some good-hearted fellows connected with other papers who would say a kind word. A good musician and friend of mine, who heard me play the music on Thursday last, said it possessed freshness, animated melody, and dramatic effect; and I felt he told the truth.

"Every happiness attend you for this season, and many to come. A merry Christmas and a happy new year.

"Yours faithfully,

"J. Blewitt."

As the subjoined note from Mr. R. W. Buss expresses the candid opinion of a once popular artist upon an important subject connected with art, I hope sufficient reason may be found for my transcribing it. The subject matter needs no elucidation from me:—

"October 24, 1853.

"Dear Sir, — Pray accept my thanks for your critique on my *first lecture.* I send an admission to the second, and hope you will be able to be present. My subject has a *direct public interest.* A host of clever fellows for nearly two hundred years have been working hard in the public service—sometimes echoing the sentiments of the public press on public questions, and in the majority of cases expressing opinions upon public affairs through the medium of their *own art.* Yet these labours remain unthought of. I hope to place them so before the public eye that men like Gravelot, Hogarth, Danby, Gilray, Bunbury, Rowlandson, Cruikshank, and many others may be admitted to deserve something better than to be set down as *only caricaturists.* My next lecture includes the works of Hogarth, Danby, Bunbury, and their contemporaries."

CHAPTER XVI.

My First Acquaintance with George Augustus Sala—His Contributions to "Household Words" and the *Daily Telegraph*—Mr. Thackeray and the "Cornhill Magazine"—The "Temple Bar" Magazine—Joseph Jefferson as Rip Van Winkle, and at the Dinner Table—A Boomerang for Home Use—First Night of "Never Too Late to Mend"—Disturbance at the Princess's Theatre.

I HAVE incidentally referred to Mr. George Augustus Sala in my reminiscences of Mr. Thackeray; and although there may be some few men of distinction who might take exception to the mention of their names while they are still amongst us, I have abundant reason to feel assured that Mr. Sala is far too conscious of the dignity of letters to be one of them. He knows full well that I am not likely to introduce matters of a mischievous tendency; and, moreover, he hardly requires to be informed, in common with less intellectual readers, that the aim and purpose of this work is really to place certain public characters before the reader in as pleasant a

light as I can. I have for many years enjoyed the friendship of this vigorous writer, and he has often reminded me of the amusement he derived from the circumstances attending our first interview. I need not mention the exact date of the occurrence, as too many years have passed over our heads to render such a disclosure absolutely necessary either to his peace of mind or my own; but I trust that the stanch believers in the proprieties of life will not be greatly shocked to learn that I first saw Sala at a well-known hostelry, not many leagues from Somerset House, where a private room had been set apart for the accommodation of a select number of individuals connected with the London press, and who were remarkably jealous of their territory being invaded by any person not belonging to their own calling. One evening, when the room was more than usually full, a gentleman was introduced as Mr. George Sala, brother of an old schoolfellow of mine—Charles Kerrison Sala.* I cannot say that at that time I had never heard of Mr. Sala; but I confess I had not read his writings —indeed, I doubt if there was anything to read, for he

* Afterwards well known upon the London stage—notably at the Princess's Theatre—under the name of Wynne.

was then, if I mistake not, emerging from the painting room of a theatre into the more tempting paths of literature. Not recognising him, however, as a member of my own immaculate fraternity, it seems I made some inquiry as to his right of entry, and receiving a reply from him greatly at variance with my notions of the "dignity of the press," I threatened —according to Sala—if he continued to assume an aggressive attitude, to throw him out of window!—a somewhat difficult proceeding, seeing that the supposed intruder was fully capable of demolishing me without much danger to his personal comfort. But my recollection serves me with sufficient exactness to warrant my saying that if I threatened such an act of summary punishment I certainly never attempted it; and, not very long after that evening, Sala and I often met in social communion, and our acquaintance, thus strangely commenced, soon ripened into friendship.

The first contribution of Mr. Sala to periodical literature which attracted special attention was "The Key of the Street," in "Household Words"—the article to which, as I have stated, Mr. Thackeray alluded in such complimentary terms in the course of one of my conversations with him; and it is not necessary

that I should describe the rapidity with which he achieved his present position, and the ability with which he has maintained it. An engagement on the *Daily Telegraph* afforded him at once an admirable opportunity for displaying those powers of observation, and that special aptitude for the exposure of social abuses, which are among the most conspicuous features of his writings; and I believe I am right in saying that, on the many occasions when he has been called upon to describe the particulars of any important public event, such as the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales, or the explosion on board the *Great Eastern*, he has been thought to have distanced his competitors. But it has not been alone in home duties that Sala has shown his great value as a journalist; for the discriminating owners of the paper in question, having read a book of his (originally published in "Household Words"), under the title of "A Journey due North," naturally discovered that he would be useful to them as a foreign correspondent, and in due course they repeatedly enlisted his services in that capacity.

Among the various countries Mr. Sala has visited from time to time with a view to a series of letters in the *Telegraph*, may be mentioned the United States

(where he wrote those graphic articles which appeared under the title of "America in the Midst of War"), Mexico, Algeria, Spain, the principal cities of Austria, Prussia, Italy, France, &c.; and the result of his several journeys has not only been of essential benefit to the newspaper of which he was the representative, but has led to the publication of his experiences in the form of volumes, which are admitted to be amongst the most interesting books of travel known to an Englishman's library.

During the progress of "William Hogarth" I received a note from Sala, in which he said—

"Don't come to dinner to-day. On hospitable cares intent, I had forgotten that Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights this week had been set apart for another number of 'Hogarth,' which I must get done *pro rationes majores*. Will you, therefore, defer your always welcome visit? I will write, or more probably see you, ere this week be out."

But Mr. Sala was not bound to rest content with being merely a contributor to a monthly work. He had a higher ambition to gratify, and not long after the conclusion of the Hogarth papers he projected a magazine of his own, with the title of "Temple

Bar," which still exists as the "Temple Bar Magazine," under the guidance of the Messrs. Bentley.

Mr. Sala having been a prominent contributor to the earlier numbers of the "Cornhill," there were, of course, a number of good-natured persons who went about saying in print and in society that Mr. Thackeray was grievously mortified at the defection of his former colleague. I believe that Mr. Sala wrote to Mr. Thackeray to inquire whether the rumours he had heard were correct. The reply of the Editor of the "Cornhill" was characteristic: "Dear S.,—No! Who tells these lies?—W. M. T." Mr. Thackeray took further occasion to show his good feeling in the matter by making a graceful allusion to the "venture of an esteemed *collaborateur*," in the preface to the next volume of the "Cornhill."

In "Temple Bar" Mr. Sala published a novel, called the "Seven Sons of Mammon," his essays called "Breakfast in Bed," "The Adventures of Captain Dangerous," and many of the most popular articles which have since been included in his writings in the permanent form they have assumed.

Those who know much of Sala will have no difficulty in admitting that, unlike many men, he is seen to best advantage in his own home; for

there he appears as a particularly attentive host, and in his desire to amuse his guests he tunes his conversation and his anecdotes to the most entertaining key he can command. I am not afraid to say that there are many who, if they read these pages, will admit that they have often passed most agreeable evenings under his roof; and they will also remember how ready he has been to celebrate at his own house any interesting event in the career of one of his contemporaries. As an instance, I may revert to a pleasant gathering which he organized, to bid "God speed" to Henry Sutherland Edwards—whose name I am glad to mention in such congenial company—on the evening previous to his departure for Poland, as the *Times* correspondent, during the last insurrection in that country. On that occasion Sala had invited a large number of friends, whose presence he knew would be as agreeable to Edwards as to himself. In the course of the evening two speeches—one in proposing prosperity to Mr. Edwards, and the other in returning thanks for his own health—were delivered by Sala in terms of such anxiety for the welfare of his friend, and with such a strong determination to amuse his company, that he no sooner touched them

by a stroke of pathos, than he excited them to uproarious laughter. Indeed, he was especially happy on that occasion in the exhibition of those *tours de force*, for which, in his after-dinner speech-making, he has always been known.

Another notable occasion on which Mr. Sala fulfilled the rites of hospitality was on the day of the University Boat Race, in the year 1868. He was then residing at The Terrace, Putney Bridge—a spot from which, with a little effort, and with the aid of an unclouded telescope, the spectators could see the start. This was too good an opportunity for such a sociable householder to resist; and Sala invited as many people as his establishment would accommodate—not confining them to one particular room, but permitting them to range over the entire premises, and to partake of *al fresco* enjoyments in the garden. The dramatic element was especially prominent that day, and amongst the gentlemen of the sock and buskin who played the leading parts were Mr. Buckstone and Mr. Toole, who kept up a grotesque diversion in the balcony, which probably rendered the Sala mansion a trifle too conspicuous to the passers-by. A more enlivening or invigorating day it was never my good fortune to

experience; and one could almost wish that Mr. Sala had been a guest, rather than the host, in order that he might narrate some of the merry doings at that boat-racing festival.

During his long sojourn in New York, Sala had become somewhat intimate with Mr. Jamieson, the actor, and had often told him that if he should ever pay a visit to the mother country he hoped he would not fail to give him the pleasure of his company. By some curious obliquity he conceived, when he hastily read the announcement that Mr. Jefferson was to appear at the Adelphi Theatre as Rip Van Winkle, that he was no other than the identical Jamieson whom he had known in America. Jefferson's *début* was to take place on Monday evening; and on the previous Friday Sala sent him a note in these laconic terms: "On Sunday, at half-past six. Pork and greens! Come on, old cuss!" As Mr. Jefferson was a stranger to Mr. Sala, he was not a little amused at this singular *contretemps;* but he very wisely determined, as he afterwards confessed, "not to throw away so good a chance," and accordingly he presented himself at Mr. Sala's, in Guilford Street, Russell Square, at the time specified.

He was most cordially received, and laughed heartily

with his host and hostess at the droll mistake which had so happily made him the guest of a man whom he was pleased and proud to know. The only other visitors were Mr. Joseph Charles Parkinson—a valuable contributor to the *Daily News*, and the author of "Under Government," and "Places and People"—Mr. Rudolph Gustavus Glover, son of a former librarian to Her Majesty, and the reader's humble servant; and we were not long in coming to the conclusion that Mr. Jefferson's quiet, unostentatious manner, and withal his resolute abstemiousness, could not be said to harmonize with one's preconceived notions of an actor from Yankee-land. He betrayed, in short, less of those characteristics which are traditionally supposed to belong to an actor, whether English or American, than I had ever before witnessed; but he amused us greatly in his comparatively reserved way, and told us several stories which gave us a little taste of his histrionic quality. Amongst these was a droll adventure he had had some years previously in Pennsylvania:—

It appeared that his heart had been disturbed by an affair of the tender passion; but, from unavoidable circumstances, he lost sight of his innamorata for a considerable time, until, at length,

meeting her in a ball-room one evening, and being stricken with self-reproaches at his neglectful conduct, he felt in duty bound to offer his apologies and to solicit forgiveness. "Oh," exclaimed the lady with that peculiar *naïveté* which belongs to her country, and apparently to that country alone, "it's of no consequence now—my father has struck ile!"

Mr. Jefferson had seen much practice in the use of the boomerang, and he entertained us for some little time by exhibiting his skill with that instrument, a specimen of which he had formed of a piece of cardboard. With this he tried several experiments, and was so far successful that he caused the machine to return to him after making the anticipated gyrations; but when others attempted to produce a similar result they signally failed. With all respect to Mr. Jamieson, whom I have not the honour of knowing, I can hardly suppose that our friendly host had much cause to regret that he had accidentally put in his place so agreeable a companion as Mr. Joe Jefferson. On the following evening that gentleman made his *début* at the Adelphi Theatre in the presence of a large assembly of playgoers, who had heard much of his impersonation of Asa Trenchard, in "Our American Cousin," but little had been said about his performance

of Rip Van Winkle, and indeed the version of the story produced on that occasion was entirely new. Such was the impression he made upon the audience that, at the close of the second act, the profound authorities who reign supreme on "first nights," met together in the lobby, and in discussing the merits of the *débutant*, unanimously admitted that he was one of the best actors, if not the very best, who had ever come from the American to the English stage. It was indeed a charming performance, full of delicate humour and natural grace, and with occasional touches of unaffected pathos, which deeply moved the sympathies of the spectators. That Mr. Jefferson did not remain in this country for a much longer period than we were favoured with his presence, was a source of considerable regret to all who justly appreciated the exquisite refinement of his acting, untinged as it was by the least approach to conventionalism, in the only part he ever played in London.

Mr. Glover, to whom I have just referred, has always been among the most welcome visitors at Mr. Sala's house, for, although he has "kept his hand out of the ink-pot," he is a cheerful literary companion, and shows a more than ordinary appreciation of authors and their books. In proof of the

strong regard existing between the two friends, I may record the fact that Glover travelled from London to Rome in the depth of a severe winter, for the pleasure of passing a week or two with Sala, and brought back with him many recollections of the Eternal City which were of value to the latter in preparing his experiences for publication.

While Mr. Sala was fulfilling his mission in America he occasionally wrote to me, and always in that unconstrained, chatty style, which surprises his friends when they consider that a liberal exercise of the pen in a matter of private correspondence is not to be expected from a man whose daily vocation is that of writing for the public. I select some extracts from one of the letters, as being strongly characteristic of the writer :—

"Don't think it has been from any lack of fraternal sympathy that I neglected to reply to your kind and jovial letter of so many months ago. Indeed, I think that when I left England I ought to have issued a solemn warning to *all* my friends that I did not mean to answer any letters. Time has passed so rapidly; my life has been such a whirl of excitement, and I have had such desperate hard work to keep pace with the infernal requirements of my mission, that my private correspondence has naturally fallen

terribly into arrear,—so much so that I have no hope of catching it up to any considerable extent. A pamphlet, however, you were lately kind enough to send me, containing Anderson's speech,* reminded me how shamefully I was in your debt, and I determined that, *coûte qui coûte*, one blot at least should be erased from my epistolary scutcheon.

"I have no news to give you—at least, for that which ordinarily goes by the name of news you must look to my letters in the *D. T.* I have lately had a very serious attack of illness—a cold ending in a low fever—and am far from well yet; and so, to the despair, I suppose, of the proprietors, missed a whole week's mails; but in general it seems to me that, as regards the length of my letters, I have been earning my bread and butter at a pretty considerable rate.

"I hope things are bright with you, and that you have plenty to do. How is William Jerrold? Of course, I never expected to hear from him as he has been so much abroad, but I suppose he is home for the winter by this time. I think he would do extremely well if he came to this country for three or four months; he is a Republican and an Abolitionist: I would take care to have his Northern sympathies well ventilated. He might make a lot of money by lecturing, and write home some Northern articles

* A speech delivered by the Hon. H. L. Anderson, on the "Marriage Bill for India," in the Council of the Viceroy of India, on the 6th April, 1864.

to *Lloyd's*, to counteract the baneful effect of my secesh rhapsodies. After all, I believe the working classes in England are, by a vast majority, on the Northern side, which they believe to be the cause of freedom; and as W. B. J. is the friend of the W. C.'s, and the W. C.'s are sure, sooner or later, to get the better of us in the way of Reform and other things, the investment would be, in the long run, a money-making one. And I seriously think he would like the country. So I might have done but for circumstances which I could not control. W. B. J.'s name is very well known in this country, and he would have a warm reception; and as soon as it was known that, politically, he was on the right side of the hedge, he might do anything with the Yankees. They will give their heads for powerful advocacy, and if I had chosen to be dishonest and to sell my employers I might have left this country with five-and-twenty thousand dollars in my pocket.

"Good-bye, *caro Giorgio:* write me by return to the Brevoort House: never mind prepaying the letter, but write and tell *everybody* who means to write to me that now is their last opportunity. I leave New York, God willing, by the *Persia*, on the 16th of November next, and shall be home on the 28th or 30th." [1864.]

I have already stated that Mr. Sala's travels led him to Mexico and Algeria; and his experiences of those countries formed the subject of a series of lectures

which he delivered in Scotland and Ireland in 1865. During his brief stay in the Green Isle I received from him a letter, in which he said—

"We arrived here this morning at four. The Mexican and Algerian lectures were eminently successful, although the attendance could not be expected to be so great as at the first, at which there were 2000 people. There were not less than 1000 at either of the last two. We were most hospitably entertained for five days by Mr. ——, M.P., at a beautiful place called ——, and all manner of Scotch magnificoes were invited each day to meet us; but I did not save much by this, as, for convenience and appearance sake, we had to keep our rooms running at the hotel, and were 'stuck' for nearly ten pounds, having only dined there twice.

"On Friday we went to Edinburgh, where we were of course delighted at exploring the Old Town, Canongate, Holyrood, &c.

"On Saturday we returned to Glasgow. They gave me a select supper (29 present) on the previous night, after the lecture, when they howled till they were hoarse, and drank toddy till they were blind, telling comic stories in the intervals. A strange race! Fearing the domestic Vehme-Gericht,* I eschewed toddy, and am pretty well, I thank you.

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* Secret tribunals, which were almost the sole checks on crime

"I lecture here to-morrow in the Ulster Hall, *gratuitously*, which is rather a 'sell,' for they expect the hall, which holds 3000 people, to be *crammed*, at 3s., 2s. and 1s. prices—just my luck.

"We dine to-morrow at Lord ——'s, at ——, drive in to the lecture, and return to sleep at ——. Lady —— wrote a very kind letter to me, to ask us to stop there altogether during our sojourn, but we concluded to go only for one night.

* * * * *

"What a row there must have been at the Princess's Theatre. I have seen no London papers for many days. For Heaven's sake, send me the most scandalous account, and *all* the news, to the Washington Hotel, Liverpool, to 'await arrival.' I think we shall be there on Thursday morning, and in London by Saturday.

"Remember the Washington Hotel, Liverpool, to all inquiring friends.

"Hitherto the weather has been delightful. If you hear of or see Gus, ask him about my pug."*

The "row" at the Princess's was on the occasion of

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in Germany during the most turbulent and lawless period in the history of that country.

* The allusion is to Augustus Mayhew, who at that time cultivated a taste for the breeding of pug-dogs; and he had promised one to his intimate friend.

the production of a drama at that theatre by Mr. Charles Reade. As I chanced to be present at the time, and as it fell to my lot to write an account of the disturbance on the following day, I shall here give the particulars as I then described them. The piece was called "It is Never Too Late to Mend," and was founded upon the novel of the same name. In that novel Mr. Reade sought to expose the "horrors of the prison system" in this country, and he desired to carry out the same object in the drama; but, inasmuch as, during the time which had elapsed since the publication of the novel and the production of the play, the evils he complained of had been greatly ameliorated, if not altogether removed, it was, to say the least of it, disingenuous on his part to dwell upon them as if they still existed in all their enormity. In the dramatic version, however, he devoted one entire act—the second—to a series of incidents representing prison life; and in order to favour the exposition of the author's views, Mr. Vining, the manager, bestowed infinite trouble and expended a considerable sum of money in converting the stage into a house of correction. Not content with aiding the action of the piece by the ordinary means of painted scenery, the manager had caused the whole interior of the building, with its

machinery for the promotion of "hard labour," to be constructed upon the most approved principles of practical architecture. The convicts exhibited were about as numerous as they might be supposed to be in a "real" prison, and they were all dressed and ticketed with a correctness and minuteness of detail which tended to favour the impression that they had escaped from actual incarceration, and had lent their timely services to the management of the theatre. Oakum-pickers were represented in ample numbers, and gangs of convicts, chained together, passed and repassed in the most mournful solemnity, until at length the painful scene changed to the hall of the prison, and afterwards to the "corridors." These corridors were carefully and practically built up from the stage to the roof; the prisoners' cells were exhibited, and the usual injunction as to the necessity for observing the strictest silence was inscribed in large letters on the walls. The governor and the gaolers constantly made their appearance, and Mr. Reade's notions as to the severity of our prison system were shown through the manner in which he made those officials treat the unfortunate malefactors under their control.

The victims chosen in furtherance of this extraordinary and singularly undramatic design were one

Tom Robinson and a poor boy named Josephs, who was imprisoned for stealing food. Solitary confinement and every other form of prison severity were undergone by those two offenders; and though Master Tom Robinson might be said to set a somewhat dangerous example to his companions in disgrace, the spectators were lost in astonishment as to what the meek and innocent-looking boy (very touchingly played, by the way, by Miss Louisa Moore, a most interesting and intelligent young lady) could possibly have done to merit the succession of tortures he was made to undergo. He was condemned to dry bread and water; he was bound arms and body to a post; his bed—or, rather, piece of sacking which formed his bed—was taken from him, and he was confined to his cell for 14 days, with every conceivable prohibition upon any proceeding which might yield him a moment's comfort or relief! At length, the tyranny of the authorities met its natural result; and the ill-treated boy fell dead, surrounded by the turnkeys, and in presence of the appalled spectators!

There were, as a matter of course, large numbers in the theatre who applauded this event (probably because the death-scene was thought to be

so life-like!); but, on the other hand, a considerable proportion of the audience vehemently protested against the exhibition. Cries of "Off, off!" "Shame, shame!" "Disgusting!" "Apology!" "Manager!" &c., were vociferously repeated, until at length those exclamations gave place to the demand that Mr. Vining should "come forward and excuse this outrage." In obedience to this very unusual but well-merited "call," Mr. Vining did come forward, and, instead of appeasing the wrath of the dissentients, made a brief speech, which, to say the least of it, was extremely injudicious, and led to further expressions of indignation and disgust—such as "Where's the Lord Chamberlain?" "This is not a political meeting." "A piece which Mr. Reade ought never to have written and Mr. Vining ought never to have accepted," &c. The chief excuse which the latter offered, in the course of his few observations, for the production of the play, or rather of that portion of it which raised so well-timed an opposition, was that he believed the exposure of our prison system contained in the novel upon which the piece was based, was found to be productive of much good. Even admitting this to be the fact, it could hardly be necessary to inform Mr. Vining that that admission

furnished no possible reason for allowing Mr. Reade to expound his peculiar theories on the stage, and at the expense of the Home Secretary, the visiting justices, the governor of the gaol, and other official dignitaries, who, if they were present in the theatre, could not, with a due regard to prudence and discretion, stand forward to defend themselves. Many events in life may be perfectly admissible and interesting in novels, where action is subservient to description, but the licence of the playwright ought necessarily to be kept within narrower limits than that of the novelist; and the stage is not the proper arena for the manifestation or discussion of political questions.

CHAPTER XVII.

Peter Cunningham at School—His Skill as an Annotator—His Antiquarian Researches—The Tomb of Alexander Pope—Vandyck in England—The Handbook of London—Journeys to Paris with W. Blanchard Jerrold—Dangerous Hands—The Courts of Prud'hommes—French Speculators—The Keys of the First Emperor's Tomb—A Descendant of the Captain of the *Inconstant* — Anecdotes of James Hannay, Thackeray, and Gustave Doré—Conclusion.

IN the course of these varied Memories I have briefly mentioned the name of my old friend and schoolfellow, Peter Cunningham—"that laborious literary antiquary," as he has been properly described—but he retains so firm a hold on my recollection, and I was so often associated with him on occasions when his well-cultivated tastes brought to my mind objects of interest and attraction, that I think it just that some few consecutive pages should be devoted exclusively to him. Peter Cunningham was contemporary with me at Christ's Hospital,* but

* I observe in a Dictionary of Biography, which, though I have

as he was some few years my senior, I cannot say that I ever attained the dignity of being one of his "cronies." In fact, I was but a small boy when he was developing into manly proportions. I well remember him, however, and I often thought, as he paced up and down the dining-hall, discharging the duties of monitor at the table of No. 4 Ward, while I was demurely seated at the table of No. 3; that he was one of the most stylish and most intelligent looking boys in the school. On the occasions of the "public suppers" on Sunday evening, during a given period of the year, his tall, upright figure was especially noticeable, for he then wore kid gloves of unexceptionable fit, and unimpeachable colour, and his toilet was altogether arranged with as scrupulous a regard to neatness and effect as could possibly be attained with a costume which admitted of very little regulation of taste on the part of the wearer.

Being the son of Allan Cunningham, biographer and poet, it is not surprising that, on his leaving school, a post was found for him under Government; and when I afterwards saw him for the first time in our

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often found it useful, is sometimes seriously at fault, the erroneous statement that he "was educated at a private school!"

maturer years, he had risen to a prominent position in the Audit Office, Somerset House. He had, moreover, achieved a name in literature, as an annotator and editor of deep research, and as a graceful, unaffected writer. He was besides a member of the Garrick and Erectheum Clubs, at the latter of which —now long since defunct—he often entertained his friends. I remember one merry evening in the summer season, when I supped there with him *tête à tête*, and we talked over his prosperous career since he left Christ's Hospital, together with our several reminiscences of that admirable institution.

Cunningham was a prominent member of the Society of Antiquaries; and his contributions to the records of that body were of essential help to him in his literary pursuits, for his name was constantly appearing in the periodicals and newspapers of his time in connexion with some discovery he had made regarding an almost-forgotten work of art, or an ancient relic of sculpture, a defaced or decaying monument, or a much-neglected public building. The special knowledge he thus acquired made him a valuable contributor to *The Builder*, and to the *Illustrated London News*, in which latter he wrote, for a considerable period, an

article every week, under the general heading of "Town and Table Talk on Literature, Art, &c." During the period he was thus engaged, I once participated in a little excursion with him on the water, from Richmond Bridge to Teddington; when he insisted on usurping the position of waterman, and in his reckless desire to enjoy at all hazards what was, and is, vulgarly called a "spree," he well nigh upset the boat several times; and, indeed, it is even now a matter of astonishment to me that we escaped a ducking.

Having taken leave of the boat and its proprietor, we paid a visit to Mr. Thomas Chappell, the music publisher, of New Bond Street, who occupied a pretty villa on the banks of the Thames, and who entertained us with the kindest hospitality. There we passed a delightful evening, with various branches of Mr. Chappell's family, and, as a matter of course, music entered largely into the measure of our enjoyment. But I was disposed to think that, agreeable as were the musical performances, my friend Cunningham would not have been displeased to exchange them for the notes of his own voice, for he was in a loquacious mood, and he was then in a part of the world which brought to his

mind many interesting associations. Having made arrangements for sleeping at Twickenham that night, we walked thither from Teddington, and when we had arrived within a short distance of the former place, Cunningham suddenly stopped, and, pulling me by the arm, exclaimed in a tone of assumed imperiousness, "Take your hat off!" He had set me the example; but, hesitating, I asked him "Why?" —"We are passing over Pope's grotto," he replied, and I obeyed his mandate immediately.

I give this little anecdote in order to show the enthusiastic veneration Peter Cunningham had for men of genius, and all that pertained to them, and I had an additional proof of this on the following morning. We slept in a double-bedded room, and, to my great surprise, my companion rose at break of day, and it was not long before I found the chamber in my exclusive possession. Having, in my turn, descended to the lower part of the premises, I found that Cunningham had been exploring the churchyard, and the moment he saw me he asked me if I had seen Pope's tomb? On my replying in the negative, he led me to the sacred spot, and having already secured admittance into the church, he pointed out to me the exact place where the poet and his parents were

interred—a place indicated by the letter "P" on one of the stones.

He also showed me, with characteristic reverence, a Latin inscription on one of the walls, written by Pope, to the memory of his father and mother; and I could not but mark his emotion when he finally drew my attention to a pyramidal tablet of grey marble, with a medallion profile of the poet. With this he had long been perfectly familiar, but he could not resist the opportunity on that bright sunny morning of descanting upon the interest which encompasses the poet's shrine; and ere many days had elapsed a communication appeared from him concerning it in one of the periodicals with which he was connected.

As an annotator, Peter Cunningham was equally enthusiastic, and his researches became so essential a part of his daily life, that he could hardly take up a volume of poems by one of our standard writers without making foot-notes or marginal commentaries. The pains he invariably took in preparing his manuscripts for the publishers was another characteristic feature in Peter Cunningham's mental organization, for he thought that the work of the pen should be commensurate with the

value of the labour it was employed upon. He once showed me the MS. of a book he was arranging for publication on the subject of "Vandyck in England," and his eyes glowed with delight when he saw the astonishment I expressed at the pains he had taken to decorate the heading of each chapter with an illuminated letter, and to mark out every salient point in the text with a due regard to typographical effect. That book must have met with an untoward fate, for it never came to light; and long before Peter Cunningham's death he had ceased to speak of it, at least to his friends.

The only letter of Peter Cunningham which I have preserved is the following:—

"Prospect Villa, Surbiton, 17th May.

"My dear George,—I did not get your Floating Invitation for a dinner on the Thames until the day after the dinner took place; and when I received your second note respecting the concert, I was too unwell even to write to you. I am here in a little villakin, far from well. I sincerely hope that the concert was a pecuniary hit. Illness alone deterred me from attending.

"Ever, dear George,

"Your old schoolfellow and friend,

"Peter Cunningham."

The dinner on the Thames referred to a luxurious picnic given on board a steam-boat by a body of gentlemen who were forming a company for consuming smoke. The aquatic excursion was from London Bridge to Millwall at the time of the building of the Great Eastern steam-ship, and from thence to Putney; the object being to show that the promoters of the company had discovered a means by which the smoke from steam-boilers might be consumed. Strange to say, however, from some unlooked-for accident or a defect in the practical arrangements, the only successful part of the day's experiments was the dinner, for the steamer persisted in smoking, in spite of all penalties and prohibitions. The concert alluded to in Cunningham's note was a musical entertainment at the St. James's Hall, in the profits of which it had been arranged that I should participate, for reasons of a purely practical nature.

Peter Cunningham may be said to have been one of the most industrious labourers in the field of literary research, and many are the works which received elucidation from his useful and practised pen; but unhappily there came a cloud over his fortunes in the very summer of his career (owing chiefly to the homage paid to him as one of the guiding lights of

the Manchester Exhibition, when he was granted six months' leave of absence from his office at Somerset House), that eclipsed in a great measure the mental good that was in him; and "poor Peter"—as every one who knew his many excellent qualities loved to call him—failed to uphold as fully as could be wished the reputation which his abilities qualified him to maintain. Few men have been more highly esteemed in their time; for he was good-natured and sociable, even to a fault; and few have more determinedly, as it were, cast aside the honours they had won and the patronage they had received. His "Handbook of London," which he tells us cost him seven years' labour, is amply sufficient to show that he revelled in antiquarian research, and that he never spared any pains to arrive at satisfactory conclusions. It would be difficult to point to a man who more completely understood and valued the words of Leigh Hunt, in speaking of the treasures and relics of past times. After stating with apothegmatical terseness that "the past is the heirloom of the world," the author of "The Indicator" and "The Town" proceeds to say:—

"When we read of events in their ordinary train, we pitch ourselves with difficulty into the scenes of action, but sometimes wholly omit to do so, and there is a want

of life and presence in them accordingly. When we are placed in the scenes, and are told to look about us: such and such a thing having happened in *that* house; *this* street being one in which another famous adventure took place; and *that* old mansion having been the dwelling of wit or beauty, we find ourselves comparatively at home, and enjoy the probability and spectacle twice as much. We feel (especially if we are personally conversant with the spot) as if Shakespeare and Milton, Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot, the club at the Mermaid, and the beauties at the Court of Whitehall, were our next-door neighbours."

These brief passages accurately picture Peter Cunningham and the pervading bent of his mind, for no companion of congenial tastes could walk with him through the neighbourhood of Soho, for instance, and listen to the information he conveyed as he pointed to various houses of historical interest, without feeling himself completely "at home." It was very truly remarked by an old friend of mine, and a firm believer in Cunningham's researches and annotations, that his object was always to impart information to the reader, and never to display the ability that was in himself.

I hope I shall be acquitted of any desire in these reminiscences to marshal forth my friends and "people I have met," in order that they may be gazed at like

the troops at a review or the children at a charity dinner. If such were my object I should have a much more difficult task to accomplish than I care to attempt, or than the reader would wish to dwell upon; but my aim has been, whenever a public name has come to my remembrance in connexion with any incident or event of general interest, to introduce it as appropriately as circumstances would admit, and always with a due regard to the exact truth.

I have been associated with many prominent characters, both personally and through the medium of correspondence, whose names I shall not presume to bring forward, because my intercourse with them has not been of such a nature as to justify publicity. This cannot, however, be said of William Blanchard Jerrold, as will have been seen in the account I have hereinbefore given of my recollections of his father. Blanchard Jerrold's name has already appeared in this work in reference to events I have recorded as presenting material more or less interesting to the general public; but it remains for me to describe briefly a few particulars of two visits I paid with him to Paris—the first in 1846, and the second in 1861. The former was not

very remarkable except for the fact that we were both entire strangers to the city, and were therefore too often left to the mercy of meddling *commissionaires* who would hardly permit us to walk from one street to another without proffering their aggressive services.

But we experienced a greater annoyance than this in the bland officiousness of a fellow guest at our hotel (the Hotel Victoria, in the Rue Chauvau Lagarde), who rejoiced in the high-sounding name of Harold Parkes Dempster. This gentleman spoke so many languages with fluency that it was difficult to discover what country had the honour of being his birth-place; though his name (but as travellers see strange things, so likewise do they assume strange names) would certainly lead to the conclusion that he was of English blood. His position at the *table d'hôte* appeared to be that of a privileged person, who by reason of his services to the establishment received his food and wine at a very reduced rate. His practice was to fix upon youthful-looking persons at dinner-time whom he supposed came under the proud denomination of "greenhorns," and to chalk out a programme of amusements for that evening and the following morning; and having thus commended himself to their favour, prevail upon them to accept his invitation to

the apartments of certain of his friends, who betrayed a not very unusual predilection for cards, especially in company with visitors who were better acquainted with English specie than with French.

Not to weary the reader with a lengthy narration of an event which the records of gambling life prove to us is by no means a novelty, it will be sufficient to relate the fact that Mr. Harold Parkes Dempster succeeded in inveigling Blanchard Jerrold and myself into a gorgeously decorated apartment *au quatrième*, occupied by a lady whom he described as a person of high birth and distinguished manners. Here cards were introduced with the most charming *naïveté*, and her ladyship was delightfully gracious to her two strange guests, even condescending to ask them to play, but at the same time avoiding any approach to absolute importunity, lest it should be supposed that her desire to make us feel "at home" was not all-paramount. Mr. Harold Parkes Dempster was, however, not quite so considerate, for he appeared to think, as the cards went alternately from his hands to my lady's and to those of a second gentleman, who was playing in a very modest downcast sort of way, that our comfort and convenience were not being sufficiently attended to, and therefore he most amiably and pressingly

entreated us to join in the game, saying that there was not a satisfactory number, and that we should make a capital five.

But I was so lost in admiration of the elegant apartment and of the superb mirrors which nearly covered the four walls, that I had no desire to fix my eyes upon the card-table, and therefore I emphatically refused; and as I sat and looked on, I observed that a page in attendance upon her ladyship amused himself by flitting round the room, and paying very strict attention to the cards in the hands of the players, and constantly directing his eyes towards the mirrors opposite to him. Now this was perhaps all perfectly innocent on his part; but as it, somehow or other, struck me that it was *just possible* he was keeping up his experience in a vocation for which honesty would not be the best qualification, I immediately came to the conclusion that if I remained any longer in that magnificent saloon I might peradventure learn more than my godfathers and godmothers would like to be responsible for. At a particular juncture, therefore, when I feared that Jerrold — who, be it remembered, had not yet attained to man's estate—was likely to yield to the repeated persuasions of Mr. Dempster,

I rose, and, with a respectful "*Bon soir,*" beat a hasty retreat, followed on the instant by my companion.

Flattering ourselves that we had happily escaped from a thraldom which might have seriously endangered our pecuniary resources, we ran down the stairs at a pace which we could not have exceeded had we been impelled by the cry of "Stop thief!" and I may freely assert that we did not lessen our speed when we found that Mr. Harold Parkes Dempster was at our heels. We, however, stood no longer upon any ceremony with that courageous gentleman, and when we saw him again on the following day the brazen look he gave us did not at all weaken the conclusion we had arrived at, that he was fully alive to the difference between a pigeon and a rook. Some few years afterwards I encountered him in London, when he savoured much more of the attributes of John Bull than of those of Jean Crapaud; and I thought, from his gait and apparel, that Providence had not greatly blessed his industrious labours.

In my second journey to Paris with Blanchard Jerrold we had an object in view beyond that of seeing the "lions" of that animated capital, and there was little fear of our being exposed to the machinations of such adventurous spirits as Mr. Harold

Parkes Dempster, for we had grown into a fair knowledge of the world.

Jerrold's purpose, in conjunction with his venerable friend Lord Brougham, was to obtain information respecting an institution called the Courts of Prud'hommes, or Conciliation Courts of Labour and Capital. Our mornings were generally occupied in visiting one of those Courts; and Jerrold being an excellent French scholar, accustomed himself to take notes of the proceedings, with a view to a work he was then about to publish on the condition of the poor of Paris. This work was to him a labour of love, and was issued—first, in the *Morning Post*, and then in permanent form—under the title of "The Children of Lutetia." In the description therein of the Prud'hommes Courts, he says:—

"I have watched the effect of these Courts; the masters and men ranged on the bench, wearing a black ribbon and a star, for badge of office, listening to complainant and defendant, without the intervention of attorney or barrister, and for a few pence settling a dispute about wages, or an apprentice, or the price of work, or wrongful dismissal, or trade marks. A dispute is first carried before a private Court: and here the majority are disposed of. But, should the private Court fail in their attempt to reconcile the dispu-

tants, the case goes before the general or public Court. From this Court there is an ultimate appeal to the Tribunal of Commerce; but the appeals are very rare. A few shillings are all the most litigious can expend in search of justice. The working man who comes before this tribunal comes before judges whom he has himself elected. He is certain that his case will be thoroughly understood, since his judges, both masters and men, are in his own trade. There are four Courts of Prud'hommes in Paris—viz., one for all metallic industries; one for textile industries; one for chemical industries; and one for miscellaneous industries. I saw how, in each case, a judge whose experience enabled him to fully understand it, set forth the laws and customs of his trade, giving his opinion as to a fair price, or as to good conduct. Some of the defendants were women, claiming more wages than they had received, or complaining of the treatment of their apprenticed children. The coolness and clearness with which these ladies set forth their grievances were remarkable. Now and then a grave Prud'homme would reprove their volubility, but, as a rule, they were more than equal to their male antagonists. Their *aplomb* and wealth of diction suggested to me spectres of French Madam Caudles, armed with cutting logic, and prepared with charges of small shot, in the shape of sarcasms, enough to make many a Benedict quail. I think it was the Honourable Mrs. Norton who said our English women had no rights: they had only wrongs.

Now, to those of my countrywomen who feel that they are poor, low, downtrodden creatures, and who may wish to learn the noble art of self-defence with the tongue, I would recommend a few mornings in the Court of the Prud'hommes, behind the Château d'Eau."

The skill and discrimination which Mr. Jerrold exercised in the inquiries he made into this and kindred subjects, enabled him some few months afterwards to read a series of papers in certain of the principal towns in the manufacturing districts; where the information he conveyed was fully appreciated, and would doubtless have been largely acted upon if the municipal powers in this country received the same encouragement from the State which is accorded to those of France, where, as Jerrold observes, "the mutual benefit societies are under central authority and are helped by the State. In every charity and asylum in Paris the State finger appears—to help generally, but always to control."

During our stay in Paris at this period our quarters were on the Boulevard Sebastopol, our sleeping apartments communicating with each other, and having no separate entrances. Jerrold's visitors were necessarily, therefore, to some extent, my visitors, for

they could not possibly get access to his room without passing through mine; and as they always came very early in the morning, we could not easily escape them. The most constant and persevering intruder was a gentleman whose name is not unfamiliar in this country to those who feel an interest in the records of pantomimical experience—Grimaldi—the Abbé Grimaldi, a Corsican. This devout personage was very far from disposed to expend all his time and energies upon religious pursuits, but afforded an apt illustration of the truth of Blanchard Jerrold's theory, that Frenchmen never have money quite out of their mind.

The Abbé had, moreover, in common with most of his countrymen, a very exaggerated notion in regard to an Englishman's means of attaining wealth, for, although it is doubtless too true that there are many of Fortune's especial favourites in this land who, in Yankee phraseology, could "buy up creation" if they thought proper,* it is not *quite* true that an expert Britisher has only to cast about him a few small seeds to reap an immediate harvest of golden grain. That such was the

* "I am going to London to-morrow," said a Yankee speculator down East; "and if I like it, by Gad, I'll buy it!"

idea cherished by the Abbé Grimaldi was abundantly proved by the nature of his arguments on the occasion of his matutinal visits to Blanchard Jerrold. The hour of his arrival was always about seven o'clock, before we had begun to "scent the morning air," and he was always bent upon one and the same mission—viz., to impress upon Jerrold the wondrous opportunity which then presented itself for making a gigantic fortune, provided the small sum of five million francs (200,000*l.*) was expended in the first instance; and this trifling amount he was quite sure could be easily obtained in London.

The idea was to purchase some estates in Corsica, and to expend a portion of the fund which Jerrold was to obtain in developing the natural resources of the property. "*C'est une affaire colossale!*" he said; but notwithstanding its colossal character, it was the Abbé's firm belief that, with proper instructions from Jerrold, I had only to go to London, and, after an absence of a few days, to return with the 200,000*l.*, or at least a large proportion of it. In vain Jerrold assured him that some men had just as much difficulty in procuring a 10*l.* note as others would have in getting possession of 10,000*l.*; and that neither he nor I had yet proved himself entitled to be

placed in the latter category. Five million francs were required, and five million could be obtained, he thought, in London with as much facility as a good dinner. This was the burden of his morning's song, and he continued to pipe it, in spite of our remonstrances, so long as our residence in Paris afforded him easy access to us; and we forbore to deny ourselves to him because he took particular care to make his appearance when he knew that we were *au lit.* Moreover, he was introduced to Jerrold by a French gentleman for whom the latter entertained the highest respect—M. Joseph Chautard—son of the Baron Chautard who commanded the brig *Inconstant,* the vessel which brought Napoleon Bonaparte from Elba when he returned to France from that island. As a reward for the Baron's services the Emperor gave him his personal service of plate, and bequeathed to him a handsome sum of money in his will; but the latter was necessarily withheld from him in consequence of the political strait to which the Emperor was reduced after his fall.

With that generous feeling, however, which the present Emperor, on his coming to the throne, displayed towards those who had been of service to him or to his illustrious ancestor, his Majesty transferred to the son the amount willed to

the father; and when I saw M. Chautard he was comfortably domiciled in a suite of apartments at the Hôtel des Invalides, where he was permitted the exclusive privilege of supplying the old soldiers with tobacco. He was a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, and was manifestly, but never ostentatiously, proud of that distinction. He had always an endless variety of speculations by which he calculated upon making millions of francs, and was so urgent in his endeavours, aided by the Abbé Grimaldi, to secure the co-operation of Blanchard Jerrold, that if the latter has not already developed into a Crœsus, it has not been the fault of those two amiable, but money-loving Frenchmen.

Amongst the various enterprises which Chautard was anxious to carry out may be mentioned the following, *seriatim*:—1. The concession for the Civita Vecchia Railway; 2. To establish a Moniteur of Universal Exhibitions; 3. To construct a steam-boiler of such extraordinary virtues, that everything of the kind then in existence would, by comparison, be of no more value than a tin kettle. But neither of these speculations receiving the encouragement he anticipated, he turned his attention to the erection of new Boulevards; and at length suc-

ceeded in obtaining a concession for one, by which he profited to the extent of a few thousand pounds, and is now cultivating his vines and olives in the south of France (where he was born), waiting peacefully and happily for his draught of the "coal-black wine," of which Barry Cornwall so impressively sings. I always found in him, notwithstanding his weakness for speculations, a pure-minded, honest-hearted gentleman, whose brain, as Jerrold gracefully described it, seemed always warmed with the bright grape of his sunny birthplace.

It was always entertaining to sit in the Invalides with the old gentleman and his friend Santini, listening to their tales of bygone times; for both had much to relate of Napoleon Bonaparte—the former benefiting, as before observed, by the Emperor's will, and the latter having been the famous and faithful valet who accompanied him to St. Helena. Santini would gossip away for hours, with the massive keys of the Emperor's tomb (of which he was the appointed guardian) dangling from his attenuated fingers—his favourite topic of course being his illustrious master, for whose dinner he told us he used to shoot birds, and for whom he patched the cocked hat that had once overshadowed Europe.

Jerrold has often repeated to me an amusing anecdote of James Hannay, amongst many others which the friends of the latter have treasured in illustration of his peculiar humour. At the time the comic periodical called *The Puppet Show* was projected, one of the proprietors called upon Hannay and begged him to contribute to that work, suggesting, with much earnestness, that he wanted "a first-rate article" from him—"something, indeed, in the style of Swift, with a dash of Sterne."—"Very good," said Hannay; "in that case I shall require a cheque of corresponding value—something in the style of Rothschild, with a dash of Baring."

From the same source I learnt another story relating to Hannay, which is quite of an analogous character. Hannay met a friend in the street one morning, and observing that he had a black eye, and was otherwise injured about the face, he immediately came to the conclusion that, as the disfigured gentleman was afflicted with a love of strong drinks, he had been imbibing too freely on the previous night. "Hollo!" he exclaimed, with a significant look, "what have you been doing, my boy?"—"Well," answered the other, disdaining to acknowledge the truth, "the fact is I was walking rapidly along the Strand when a

thundering big dog ran between my legs, and threw me on to my head." "Ha!" said Hannay, pointing expressively to his friend's lips, "let me advise you to *take a hair* of that dog."

The name of James Hannay naturally suggests that of his intimate ally, Sydney Laman Blanchard, the eldest son of the late Laman Blanchard, who was well known as a graceful poet and industrious contributor to the periodical literature of his day. Sydney Blanchard is conspicuous among his friends for his geniality and faculty for describing things with a peculiar rotundity of expression and whimsical exaggeration of epithet and antithesis. The great lights of *Punch* were once a little disconcerted by a humorous hit of Blanchard's. He was spending an evening with a few choice specimens of the literati of London, when the conversation turned, as it invariably does on such occasions, upon the possibility and expediency of filling up certain supposed voids in the book market. At length Blanchard suggested an idea which he was quite sure would produce great results—he should go home immediately, "and start a COMIC *Punch!*"

Here are two of Blanchard's whimsical comparisons which occur to me:—

The cashier at a certain newspaper-office always slips away when he is wanted to pay money. Compared with him the eel is an adhesive animal.

Our Militia mess is conducted upon a scale of expense compared with which "ducks and drakes" would be a prudential measure of economy.

I have before me a pleasant, chatty letter from William Blanchard Jerrold, such as he well knows how to write, when he *can* sever himself for a few minutes from the laborious ties of his many avocations. At the time I received this communication Jerrold was on a visit to his brother in a little sequestered nook, where he was wont to seek refuge when desirous of devoting a few days—not to recreations, for that would be quite out of the question with him—but to the agreeable pastime of *quiet* writing! It chanced that, at the same time, I was staying with my hospitable friend Osborn Daintree, at Lolworth Grange, St. Ives, whither he had invited me, in order that, under the invigorating influence of his charming domain, I might fulfil the task which this work entailed upon me.

This worthy gentleman was determined to test, as far as he could, my powers of self-sustainment in the

recreations of a country life, for scarcely a day passed that he did not enter my room when I was writing, and compel me to join him in a shooting expedition over grounds that were almost impassable, even to a poacher, or to ride one of his horses through fields by no means conducive to corporeal ease (for the cruel animal would always take advantage of my tender handling), or to drive his dog-cart to such a distance from home as would involve me in the responsibility of returning late at night along a lonely road. On one of these latter occasions I achieved a feat which I believe was never known to have been performed by the most dauntless equestrian that ever flew round a circus—viz., in driving a fiery steed for several miles during such a storm of thunder and lightning as was calculated to make the noblest animal leap out of his harness; and how I arrived at my journey's end none but the horse knew!

These vigorous exercises, however, formed a healthy relaxation from the sedentary duties of authorship; and, as it is more than probable that I should never have been "outside a horse" at this particular period, or under the fire of a sportsman's gun, had it not been for the considerate kindness of mine host, I must beg him to regard the *whole* of this book (a great part

of which was written at his house) as a fitting testimony of my gratitude.

The letter to which I have referred is as follows:—

"Bracknell, Berks, Sept. 19, 1869.
"(Returning to the delights of London to-night, whither direct to me.)

"My dear Squire George Pepys,—Bravo! You are right, and I am glad you are sticking to your work, for it is only thus that you can keep the golden thread of your narrative bright and clear. You are gathering a rare bunch of rosebuds—while you may. I have been, as usual, the *idle* apprentice—ink from my hand to my shoes. You will say you can see I manage to keep my *head* out of it!

"But I have begun in this wet solitude, and in a gale of wind, an old idea I have nursed, on which I want to make something more, and better, than money. I hope you will see chapters 1 and 2 of 'The Christian Vagabond' in the next number of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' No news yet about the ——.* I am afraid it is too good to fall within the severely-limited circle of my fortunes. To deserve it is not to get it, especially with my party.

This is a provoking place. I hear the guns on all sides, and eat—*mutton!* I used to see baskets at my

* A public appointment which he hoped to obtain.

door, but our long turn abroad has broken the custom: and *bought* game hasn't the right flavour.

"You, I presume, have an intimate acquaintance with the Rev. Mr. Partridge and Dean Pheasant, and sleep upon a game-feather bed, to dream of bread sauce. I can hear you—'Kept the right time—to five minutes.' 'Yes, just *that* piece more; thank you!'

"Thanks for your note.

"P.S.—Don't come back in gaiters!"

Apropos of Thackeray, I learnt from Blanchard Jerrold an anecdote which is so characteristic of the former that I cannot hesitate to introduce it in this place. At one of the Saturday evening meetings of "Our Club," Dr. Sibson, one of its earliest members, brought the intelligence that the Prince Consort was dying. On the following morning Thackeray was standing at the top of the steps leading into the Reform Club —the thumb and forefinger of each hand in his waistcoat-pockets, as was constantly his wont, when Jerrold—a fellow member of that Club—was about to enter the building. "Have you heard the news?" inquired Thackeray, as Jerrold ascended the steps. —"No," replied the latter. "The Prince is dead," said Thackeray; "POOR DEAR GENTLEWOMAN!" A delicate

piece of patronage bestowed by literature upon majesty itself!

Military anecdotes, or rather anecdotes of military men, are not exactly within my province; but I cannot resist the opportunity of recording a reminiscence of the late Duke of Wellington, respecting whom I think it may be said that more stories have been *invented* than have been told with any regard to veracity. There is every reason to believe, however, that the following is strictly true; but, whether true or not, it may be safely affirmed that, it is at least strongly characteristic of the "Iron Duke." During the time that his Grace was Commander-in-Chief, the late Lord Combermere—who, as is well known, received a peerage for his eminent services in the Peninsula—presented himself at the War Office one morning, and having reached the apartment where sat the Duke of Wellington, he informed the attendant outside that he desired to speak to his Grace. As a matter of course every courtesy was shown to so distinguished an officer as Lord Combermere, and the messenger was about to enter the room to announce his name to the Commander-in-Chief. "Stop!" said the Peninsular hero. "What sort of humour is he in this morning?"—"Rather irritable, my lord," replied the attendant; "but if you will

remain out here for a few moments, I will leave the door ajar, and you will hear what he says when I announce you." The door was accordingly left partially open, and Lord Combermere followed the suggestion of the trusty messenger. "My Lord Combermere wishes to see your Grace," said the latter. —"What does that d—d old fool want?" exclaimed the Duke, hastily rising from the table. Out sprang the bewildered attendant as if a piece of ordnance had been suddenly fired at him; and, addressing Lord Combermere, said, "You hear, my lord, what sort of humour he's in; but I daresay he will see *you*."—"Thank you," said the vanquished cavalry officer; "another time," and he hastened away.

N.B. Viscount Combermere was four years younger than the Duke of Wellington, and lived thirteen years longer.

Ere this book escapes the grasp of the printing-press, the public will have become alive to the fact that Mr. Blanchard Jerrold and M. Gustave Doré are conjointly engaged on a work, descriptive and illustrative of London and the leading characteristics of the great city. In order to fulfil this responsible mission as carefully and comprehensively as possible, the artist and the author have necessarily made many

journeys together, both by land and water; and on one memorable occasion they passed up the river by steamer from Greenwich to Westminster—Doré storing his memory with types of character *en route* (for he never makes a sketch at the moment), and Jerrold having occasional recourse to his note-book, when any scene presented itself which he could not trust to his recollection to bring to light.

Arrived at Westminster Bridge, and having fortified their appetites by the invigorating breeze on the water, they were not long ere they were decided upon dining, and the Westminster Palace Hotel was immediately fixed upon for the purpose. They entered the *salle à manger*, and their attention was at once attracted by a large party of gentlemen partaking of a sumptuous banquet at a table which had been specially prepared for them. So persistently did the company handle their knives and forks in solemn silence, that Doré was at a loss to conceive the cause of their assembling for convivial purposes, and he very naturally sought to learn the object of the gathering. "Oh," said Jerrold, "strange as it may appear, they are celebrating a victory they have just achieved in the passing of a railway bill through Parliament."

"*Mais, mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Doré, "one would

rather suppose they were deploring a defeat, for every one seems far too sad to speak."

"So," said Jerrold, "Froissart was not wrong, you see—we Englishmen enjoy ourselves sadly."

At length one of the guests, feeling probably that it was almost time to break the silence, ventured to make an observation; but in a tone of voice which rendered it quite inaudible, except to those who sat in immediate contiguity to him.

"*Ah, le bavard!*" exclaimed Doré, in a voice loud enough for many of the company to hear him. "What forfeit will he have to pay for this outrage?" But a knowledge of French not being amongst their accomplishments, the words were lost upon them, and the wondering artist abandoned himself to the reflection that, in picking up English character, he had better avoid seeking it at the dinner-table.

Apropos of Gustave Doré, it may not be uninteresting to the reader to learn that his surprising excellence in the art of drawing the human figure has arisen from the pains he took in earlier life to acquire a thorough knowledge of anatomy. In proof of this fact I will here relate a brief incident. In the summer of last year M. Doré invited me, in company with Blanchard Jerrold, to dine with him at

Verey's, in Regent Street. We had a private room on the first floor, and not only enjoyed a favourable specimen of Doré's discriminating hospitality, but had the satisfaction of obtaining an insight into the thoroughly conscientious way in which, from the beginning of his career, he has pursued the vocation through which he has achieved world-wide distinction. He had always felt justified, he said, in giving full play to his imagination where he had to treat of the external world; but in depicting the "human form divine," he had studiously endeavoured to draw every salient line with physiological correctness. In order to cultivate this desire he had made himself a student in the Paris hospitals, and had worked at anatomy with as much zeal and perseverance as if he had intended to follow the profession of a surgeon. The result was that he had long been fully acquainted with the structure of the human frame, and could assign to every bone and every artery its proper place in the body. In vindication of this statement he reminded us of a drawing of his in the "*Contes Drolatiques*," representing an internal section of man's anatomical development—a somewhat repulsive subject, certainly; but it formed a truthful illustration of Balzac's fantastic text.

"May I ask," said I, "how long you devoted yourself to the study of anatomy at the hospitals?"

"Two years," replied Doré; "and I am quite sure that I never spent two years more profitably."

"But," said Jerrold, "did you really think it necessary, for the purposes of your art, to enter into all the most minute details in the structure of the human frame?"

"*Mais oui,*" exclaimed Doré, with increasing earnestness. "*Il faut fourrer la main dedans.*"

In this emphatic expression may be found one of the secrets of Gustave Doré's remarkable success as a scrupulously accurate, yet withal poetical illustrator; and many a struggling artist who aspires to honours similar to those which he has attained, would do well to consider whether he might not derive considerable advantage from following so wise an example.

I find I have brought my reminiscences to an end by relating two anecdotes concerning an eminent French artist, and it may possibly be objected that in doing so I have given him too prominent a place among names which are almost exclusively English. But it should be remembered that, although Gustave

Doré first won his renown in France, he has of late years fully identified himself with the literature of this country; for, apart from his illustrations to the Bible, "Don Quixote," La Fontaine's "Fables," Dante's great poem, &c., all of which originally appeared in Paris, and afterwards in London, he has touched with his master-hand the works of Milton, Tennyson, and Hood. Indeed, it may be safely predicted, from his present aspirations and intentions, that his popularity in England will ere long be commensurate with the reputation he has gained in the land of his birth. He first became known in this country about fourteen years ago, when his friend Blanchard Jerrold brought over from Paris his illustrations to the legends of "The Wandering Jew," and arranged for their appearance in an English dress.

I have striven hard to fix upon an appropriate termination to this book; but in truth it is as difficult a task to accomplish as it is to dispose of the characters in a novel. Indeed, I am inclined to think that in the latter case there are even fewer obstacles to surmount, for the novelist has at least the advantage of being able to kill off as many of his characters

as he pleases, whereas the biographer is pained to speak of the "grim destroyer" at all; and when he does so, it is generally because he feels that a gap has been made in the social circle of far too wide a character to be readily filled up. The foregoing pages unhappily reveal many such gaps in the ranks of the gifted among my countrymen; and, as the dreary space lies open before me, I indulge the earnest hope that, whenever a desire is felt to occupy it, the brightest beacon may rise to guide the aspirant on his way.

THE END.

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